This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com

A 1,076,374

BUHR
GRAD
---
DC
203
.S43
1827
v.3

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
LIBRARIES
1817

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

Digitized by Google

——— Sed non in Cæsare tantum
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis; sed nescia virtus
Stare loco: solusque pudor non vincere bello.
Acer et indomitus; quo spes quoque ira vocasset,
Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro:
Successus urgere suos: instare favori
Numinis: impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret: gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.

LUCANI *Pharsalia*, Lib. I.

Digitized by Google

BulR/GRAD
gift
8-31-2005

Jno Hay

THE

# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,

EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

WITH A

PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY," &c.

---

IN NINE VOLUMES.

---

VOL. III.

---

EDINBURGH:

Printed by Ballantyne and Co.

FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, & GREEN, LONDON;

AND

CADELL & CO., EDINBURGH.

1827.

Digitized by Google

GRADIBOHR
DC
203
.S43
1827
v.3

Digitized by Google

# CONTENTS.

## VOLUME III.

### CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

CORSICA.—Family of Buonaparte.—Napoleon born 15th August 1769—His early Habits—Sent to the Royal Military School at Brienne—His great Progress in Mathematical Science—Deficiency in Classical Literature—Anecdotes of him while at School—Removed to the General School of Paris.—When Seventeen Years Old, appointed 2d Lieutenant of Artillery—His early Politics—Promoted to a Captaincy.—Pascal Paoli.—Napoleon sides with the French Government against Paoli.—Along with his Brother Lucien, he is banished from Corsica—Never revisits it—Always unpopular there, . 3

### CHAPTER II.

Siege of Toulon.—Recapitulation.—Buonaparte appointed Brigadier-General of Artillery, with the Command of the Artillery at Toulon—Finds everything in disorder—His Plan for obtaining the Surrender of the Place—Adopted.—Anecdotes during the Siege.—Allied Troops resolve to evacuate Toulon—Dreadful Particulars of the Evacuation—England censured on this occasion.—Lord Lynedoch.—Fame of Buonaparte increases, and he is appointed Chief of Battalion in the Army of Italy—Joins Head-quarters at Nice.—On the Fall of Robespierre, Buonaparte superseded in command—Arrives in Paris in May 1795 to solicit employment—He is unsuccessful.—



Digitized by Google

Talma.—Retrospect of the Proceedings of the National Assembly.—Difficulties in forming a new Constitution.—Appointment of the Directory—of the Two Councils of Elders and of Five Hundred.—Nation at large, and Paris in particular, disgusted with their pretensions.—Paris assembles in Sections.—General Danican appointed their Commander-in-Chief.—Menou appointed by the Directory to disarm the National Guards—but suspended for incapacity.—Buonaparte appointed in his room.—The Day of the Sections.—Conflict betwixt the Troops of the Convention under Buonaparte, and those of the Sections of Paris under Danican.—The latter defeated with much slaughter.—Buonaparte appointed Second in Command of the Army of the Interior—then General in Chief—Marries Madame Beauharnois—Her Character.—Buonaparte immediately afterwards joins the Army of Italy, . . . 26

## CHAPTER III.

The Alps.—Feelings and Views of Buonaparte on being appointed to the Command of the Army of Italy—General Account of his new Principles of Warfare—Mountainous Countries peculiarly favourable to them.—Retrospect of Military Proceedings since October 1795.—Hostility of the French Government to the Pope.—Massacre of the French Envoy Basseville, at Rome.—Austrian Army under Beaulieu.—Napoleon's Plan for entering Italy—Battle of Monte Notte, and Buonaparte's first Victory—Again defeats the Austrians at Millesimo—and again under Colli—Takes possession of Cherasco—King of Sardinia requests an Armistice, which leads to a Peace, concluded on very severe Terms.—Close of the Piedmontese Campaign.—Napoleon's Character at this period, 85

## CHAPTER IV.

Further progress of the French Army under Buonaparte—He crosses the Po, at Placenza, on 7th May.—Battle of Lodi takes place on the 10th, in which the French are victorious.—Remarks on Napoleon's Tactics in this celebrated Action.—French take possession of Cremona and Pizzighitone.—Milan deserted by the Archduke Ferdinand and his Duchess.—Buo-

Digitized by Google

naparte enters Milan on the 14th May.—General situation of the Italian States at this period.—Napoleon inflicts fines upon the neutral and unoffending States of Parma and Modena, and extorts the surrender of some of their finest Pictures.—Remarks upon this novel procedure, . . . . . 115

## CHAPTER V.

Directory propose to divide the Army of Italy betwixt Buonaparte and Kellermann.—Buonaparte resigns, and the Directory give up the point.—Insurrection against the French at Pavia —crushed—and the Leaders shot.—Also at the Imperial Fiefs and Lugo, quelled and punished in the same way.—Reflections.—Austrians defeated at Borghetto, and retreat behind the Adige.—Buonaparte narrowly escapes being made Prisoner at Valeggio.—Mantua blockaded.—Verona occupied by the French.—King of Naples secedes from Austria.—Armistice purchased by the Pope.—The Neutrality of Tuscany violated, and Leghorn occupied by the French Troops.—Views of Buonaparte respecting the Revolutionizing of Italy—He temporizes.—Conduct of the Austrian Government at this Crisis.—Beaulieu displaced, and succeeded by Wurmser.—Buonaparte sits down before Mantua, . . . . . 154

## CHAPTER VI.

Campaign on the Rhine.—General Plan.—Wartensleben and the Archduke Charles retire before Jourdan and Moreau.—The Archduke forms a junction with Wartensleben, and defeats Jourdan, who retires—Moreau, also, makes his celebrated Retreat through the Black Forest.—Buonaparte raises the siege of Mantua, and defeats the Austrians at Salo and Lonato.—Misbehaviour of the French General, Valette, at Castiglione. —Lonato taken, with the French Artillery, on 3d August.—Retaken by Massena and Augereau.—Singular escape of Buonaparte from being captured at Lonato.—Wurmser defeated between Lonato and Castiglione, and retreats on Trent and Roveredo.—Buonaparte resumes his position before Mantua.—Effects of the French Victories on the different Italian States. —Inflexibility of Austria.—Wurmser recruited.—Battle of

Digitized by Google

Roveredo.—French victorious, and Massena occupies Trent.—Buonaparte defeats Wurmser at Primolano—and at Bassano, 8th September.—Wurmser flies to Vicenza.—Battle of Arcola.—Wurmser finally shut up within the walls of Mantua, 184

## CHAPTER VII.

Corsica reunited with France.—Critical situation of Buonaparte in Italy at this period.—The Austrian General Alvinzi placed at the head of a new Army.—Various Contests, attended with no decisive result.—Want of concert among the Austrian Generals.—French Army begin to murmur.—First Battle of Arcola.—Napoleon in personal danger.—No decisive result.—Second Battle of Arcola—The French victorious.—Fresh want of concert among the Austrian Generals.—General Views of Military and Political Affairs, after the conclusion of the fourth Italian Campaign.—Austria commences a fifth Campaign—but has not profited by experience.—Battle of Rivoli, and Victory of the French.—Further successful at La Favorita.—French regain their lost ground in Italy.—Surrender of Mantua.—Instances of Napoleon's Generosity, . . 215

## CHAPTER VIII.

Situation and Views of Buonaparte at this period of the Campaign.—His politic Conduct towards the Italians—Popularity.—Severe terms of Peace proposed to the Pope—rejected.—Napoleon differs from the Directory, and Negotiations are renewed—but again rejected.—The Pope raises his Army to 40,000 Men—Napoleon invades the Papal Territories.—The Papal Troops defeated near Imola—and at Ancona—which is captured.—Loretto taken.—Clemency of Buonaparte to the French recusant Clergy.—Peace of Tolentino.—Napoleon's Letter to the Pope.—San Marino.—View of the situation of the different Italian States—Rome—Naples—Tuscany—Venice, . . . . . 254

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER IX.

Archduke Charles—Compared with Napoleon—Fettered by the Aulic Council.—Napoleon, by a stratagem, passes the Tagliamento, and compels the Archduke to retreat.—Gradisca carried by storm.—Chiusa-Veneta taken by Massena, with the loss of 5000 Austrians, Baggage, Cannon, &c.—The Seaports of Trieste and Fiume occupied by the French.—Venice breaks the Neutrality, and commences Hostilities by a massacre of 100 Frenchmen at Verona.—Terrified on learning that an Armistice had taken place betwixt France and Austria—Circumstances which led to this.—The Archduke retreats by hasty marches on Vienna—His prospects of success in defending it—The Government and People irresolute, and the Treaty of Leoben signed—Venice now makes the most humiliating submissions.—Napoleon's Speech to the Venetian Envoys—He declares War against Venice, and evades obeying the orders of the Directory to spare it.—The Great Council, on 31st May, concede everything to Buonaparte, and disperse in terror.—Terms granted by the French General, . . 288

## CHAPTER X.

Napoleon's amatory Correspondence with Josephine.—His Court at Montebello.—Negotiations and Pleasure mingled there.—Genoa.—Revolutionary spirit of the Genoese.—They rise in insurrection, but are quelled by the Government, and the French plundered and imprisoned.—Buonaparte interferes, and appoints the outlines of a new Government.—Sardinia.—Naples.—The Cispadane, Transpadane, and Emilian Republics, united under the name of the Cisalpine Republic.—The Valteline.—The Grisons.—The Valteline united to Lombardy.—Great improvement of Italy, and the Italian Character, from these changes.—Difficulties in the way of Pacification betwixt France and Austria.—The Directory and Napoleon take different views.—Treaty of Campo Formio.—Buonaparte takes leave of the Army of Italy, to act as French Plenipotentiary at Rastadt, . . . . . 326



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

## CHAPTER I.

*Corsica.—Family of Buonaparte.—Napoleon born 15th August 1769—His early Habits—Sent to the Royal Military School at Brienne—His great Progress in Mathematical Science—Deficiency in Classical Literature.—Anecdotes of him while at School—Removed to the General School of Paris.—When seventeen Years Old, appointed 2d Lieutenant of Artillery—His early Politics—Promoted to a Captaincy.—Pascal Paoli.—Napoleon sides with the French Government against Paoli—Along with his Brother Lucien, he is banished from Corsica—Never revisits it—Always unpopular there.*

THE Island of Corsica was, in ancient times, remarkable as the scene of Seneca's exile, and in the last century was distinguished by the memorable stand which the natives made in defence of their liberties against the Genoese and French, during a war which tended to show the high and indomitable spirit of the islanders, united as it is with the fiery

Digitized by Google

and vindictive feelings proper to their country and climate.

In this island, which was destined to derive its future importance chiefly from the circumstance, NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, or BONAPARTE,* had his origin. His family was noble, though not of much distinction, and rather reduced in fortune. Flattery afterwards endeavoured to trace the name which he had made famous, into remote ages, and researches were made through ancient records, to discover that there was one Buonaparte who had written a book, another who had signed a treaty—a female of the name who had given birth to a pope, with other minute claims of distinction, which Napoleon justly considered as trivial, and unworthy of notice. He answered the Emperor of Austria, who had a fancy of tracing his son-in-law's descent from one of the petty sovereigns of Treviso, that he was the Ro-

* There was an absurd debate about the spelling of the name, which became, as trifles often do, a sort of party question. Buonaparte had disused the superfluous *u*, which his father retained in the name, and adopted a more modern spelling. This was represented on one side as an attempt to bring his name more nearly to the French idiom; and, as if it had been a matter of the last moment, the vowel was obstinately replaced in the name, by a class of writers who deemed it politic not to permit the successful General to relinquish the slightest mark of his Italian extraction, which was in every respect impossible for him either to conceal or to deny, even if he had nourished such an idea. In his baptismal register, his name is spelled Napoleone Bonaparte, though the father subscribes, Carlo Buonaparte. The spelling seems to have been quite indifferent.

Digitized by Google

dolph of Hapsbourg of his family; and to a genealogist, who made a merit of deducing his descent from some ancient line of Gothic princes, he caused reply to be made, that he dated his patent of nobility from the battle of Monte Notte, that is, from his first victory.

All that is known with certainty of Napoleon's family may be told in few words. The Buonapartes were a family of some distinction in the middle ages; their names are inscribed in the Golden Book at Treviso, and their armorial bearings are to be seen on several houses in Florence. But attached, during the civil war, to the party of the Ghibellines, they of course were persecuted by the Guelphs; and being exiled from Tuscany, one of the family took refuge in Corsica, and there established himself and his successors, who were regularly enrolled among the noble natives of the island, and enjoyed all the privileges of gentle blood.

The father of Napoleon, Charles Buonaparte, was the principal descendant of this exiled family. He was regularly educated at Pisa, to the study of the law, and is stated to have possessed a very handsome person, a talent for eloquence, and a vivacity of intellect, which he transmitted to his son. He was a patriot also and a soldier, and assisted at the gallant stand made by Paoli against the French. It is said he would have emigrated along with Paoli, who was his friend, and, it is believed, his kinsman, but was

Digitized by Google

withheld by the influence of his father's brother, Lucien Buonaparte, who was Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Ajaccio, and the wealthiest person of the family.

It was in the middle of civil discord, fights and skirmishes, that Charles Buonaparte married Lætitia Ramolini, one of the most beautiful young women of the island, and possessed of a great deal of firmness of character. She partook the dangers of her husband during the years of civil war, and is said to have accompanied him on horseback in some military expeditions, or perhaps hasty flights, shortly before her being delivered of the future Emperor. Though left a widow in the prime of life, she had already borne her husband thirteen children, of whom five sons and three daughters survived him. I. Joseph, the eldest, who, though placed by his brother in an obnoxious situation, as intrusive King of Spain, held the reputation of a good and moderate man. II. Napoleon himself. III. Lucien, scarce inferior to his brother in ambition and talent. IV. Louis, the merit of whose character consists in its unpretending worth, and who renounced a crown rather than consent to the oppression of his subjects. V. Jerome, whose disposition is said to have been chiefly marked by a tendency to dissipation. The females were, I. Maria Anne, afterwards Grand Duchess of Tuscany, by the name of Elisa. II. Maria Annonciada, who became Ma-

Digitized by Google

ria Pauline, Princess of Borghese. III. Carlotta, or Caroline, wife of Murat, and Queen of Naples.

The family of Buonaparte being reconciled to the French government after the emigration of Paoli, enjoyed the protection of the Count de Marbœuf, the French Governor of Corsica, by whose interest Charles was included in a deputation of the nobles of the island, sent to Louis XVI. in 1776. As a consequence of this mission, he was appointed to a judicial situation, that of assessor of the tribunal of Ajaccio, the income of which aided him to maintain his increasing family, which the smallness of his patrimony, and some habits of expense, would otherwise have rendered difficult. Charles Buonaparte, the father of Napoleon, died at the age of about forty years, of an ulcer in the stomach, on the 24th February 1785. His celebrated son fell a victim to the same disease. During Napoleon's grandeur, the community of Montpellier expressed a desire to erect a monument to the memory of Charles Buonaparte. His answer was both sensible and in good taste. "Had I lost my father yesterday," he said, "it would be natural to pay his memory some mark of respect consistent with my present situation. But it is twenty years since the event, and it is one in which the public can take no concern. Let us leave the dead in peace."

The subject of our narrative was born, according to the best accounts, and his own belief, upon the



Digitized by Google

15th day of August 1769, at his father's house in Ajáccio, forming one side of a court which leads out of the Rue Charles.* We read with interest, that his mother's good constitution, and bold character of mind, having induced her to attend mass upon the day of his birth, (being the Festival of the Assumption,) she was obliged to return home immediately, and as there was no time to prepare a bed or bedroom, she was delivered of the future victor upon a temporary couch prepared for her accommodation, and covered with an ancient piece of tapestry, representing the heroes of the Iliad. The infant was christened by the name of Napoleon, an obscure saint, who had dropped to leeward, and fallen altogether out of the calendar, so that his namesake never knew which day he was to celebrate as the festival of his patron. When questioned on this subject by the bishop who confirmed him, he answered smartly, that there were a great many saints, and only three hundred and sixty-five days to divide amongst them. The politeness of the Pope promoted the patron in order to compliment the god-child, and Saint Napoleon des Ursins was accommodated with a festival. To render this compliment, which no one but a Pope could have paid, still more flattering, the feast of Saint Napoleon was fixed for the fifteenth August, the birth-day of the Emperor, and the day on which he signed the

* Benson's Sketches of Corsica, p. 4.

Digitized by Google

Concordat. So that Napoleon had the rare honour of promoting his patron saint.

The young Napoleon had, of course, the simple and hardy education proper to the natives of the mountainous island of his birth, and in his infancy was not remarkable for more than that animation of temper, and wilfulness and impatience of inactivity, by which children of quick parts and lively sensibility are usually distinguished. The winter of the year was generally passed by the family of his father at Ajaccio, where they still preserve and exhibit, as the ominous plaything of Napoleon's boyhood, the model of a brass cannon, weighing about thirty pounds.* We leave it to philosophers to inquire, whether the future love of war was suggested by the accidental possession of such a toy; or whether the tendency of the mind dictated the selection of it; or, lastly, whether the nature of the pastime, corresponding with the taste which chose it, may not have had each their action and reaction, and contributed between them to the formation of a character so warlike.

The same traveller who furnishes the above anecdote, gives an interesting account of the country retreat of the family of Buonaparte, during the summer.

Going along the sea-shore from Ajaccio towards

* Sketches of Corsica, p. 4.

Digitized by Google

the Isle Sanguiniere, about a mile from the town, occur two stone pillars, the remains of a door-way, leading up to a dilapidated villa, once the residence of Madame Buonaparte's half-brother on the mother's side, whom Napoleon created Cardinal Fesch.* The house is approached by an avenue, surrounded and overhung by the cactus and other shrubs, which luxuriate in a warm climate. It has a garden and a lawn, showing amidst neglect vestiges of their former beauty, and the house is surrounded by shrubberies, permitted to run to wilderness. This was the summer residence of Madame Buonaparte and her family. Almost inclosed by the wild olive, the cactus, the clematis, and the almond-tree, is a very singular and isolated granite rock, called Napoleon's grotto, which seems to have resisted the decomposition which has taken place around. The remains of a small summer-house are visible beneath the rock, the entrance to which is nearly closed by a luxuriant fig-tree. This was Buonaparte's frequent retreat, when the vacations of the school at which he studied permitted him to visit home.—How the imagination labours to form an idea of the visions, which, in this sequestered and romantic spot, must have arisen before the eyes of the future hero of an hundred battles!

* The mother of Letitia Ramolini, wife of Carlo Buonaparte, married a Swiss officer in the French service, named Fesch, after the death of Letitia's father.

Digitized by Google

The Count de Marbœuf, already mentioned as Governor of Corsica, interested himself in the young Napoleon, so much as to obtain him an appointment to the Royal Military School at Brienne, which was maintained at the royal expense, in order to bring up youths for the engineer and artillery service. The malignity of contemporary historians has ascribed a motive of gallantry towards Madame Buonaparte as the foundation of this kindness; but Count Marbœuf had arrived at a period of life when such connexions are not to be presumed, nor did the scandal receive any currency from the natives of Ajaccio.

Nothing could be more suitable to the nature of young Buonaparte's genius, than the line of study which thus fortunately was opened before him. His ardour for the abstract sciences amounted to a passion, and was combined with a singular aptitude for applying them to the purposes of war, while his attention to pursuits so interesting and exhaustless in themselves, was stimulated by his natural ambition and desire of distinction. Almost all the scientific teachers at Brienne, being accustomed to study the character of their pupils, and obliged by their duty to make memoranda and occasional reports on the subject, spoke of the talents of Buonaparte, and the progress of his studies, with admiration. Circumstances of various kinds, exaggerated or invented, have been circulated concerning the youth of a

Digitized by Google

person so remarkable. The following are given upon good authority.*

The conduct of Napoleon among his companions, was that of a studious and reserved youth, addicting himself deeply to the means of improvement, and rather avoiding than seeking the usual temptations to dissipation of time. He had few friends, and no intimates; yet at different times, when he chose to exert it, he exhibited considerable influence over his fellow-students, and when there was any joint plan to be carried into effect, he was frequently chosen Dictator of the little republic.

In the time of winter, Buonaparte upon one occasion engaged his companions in constructing a fortress out of the snow, regularly defended by ditches and bastions, according to the rules of fortification. It was considered as displaying the great powers of the juvenile engineer in the way of his profession, and was attacked and defended by the students, who divided into parties for the purpose, until the battle became so keen that their superiors thought it proper to proclaim a truce.

The young Buonaparte gave another instance of address and enterprise upon the following occasion.

---

* They were many years since communicated to the author by Messrs Joseph and Louis Law, brothers of General Baron Lauriston, Buonaparte's favourite aid-de-camp. These gentlemen, or at least Joseph, were educated at Brienne, but at a later period than Napoleon. Their distinguished brother was his contemporary.

Digitized by Google

There was a fair held annually in the neighbourhood of Brienne, where the pupils of the Military School used to find a day's amusement; but on account of a quarrel betwixt them and the country people upon a former occasion, or for some such cause, the masters of the Institution had directed that the students should not on the fair-day be permitted to go beyond their own precincts, which were surrounded with a wall. Under the direction of the young Corsican, however, the scholars had already laid a plot for securing their usual day's diversion. They had undermined the wall which encompassed their exercising ground, with so much skill and secrecy, that their operations remained entirely unknown till the morning of the fair, when a part of the boundary unexpectedly fell, and gave a free passage to the imprisoned students, of which they immediately took the advantage, by hurrying to the prohibited scene of amusement.

But although on these, and perhaps other occasions, Buonaparte displayed some of the frolic temper of youth, mixed with the inventive genius and the talent for commanding others by which he was distinguished in after time, his life at school was in general that of a recluse and severe student, acquiring by his judgment, and treasuring in his memory, that wonderful process of almost unlimited combination, by means of which he was afterwards able to simplify the most difficult and complicated undertakings. His

Digitized by Google

mathematical teacher was proud of the young islander, as the boast of his school, and his other scientific instructors had the same reason to be satisfied.

In languages Buonaparte was less a proficient, and never acquired the art of writing or spelling French, far less foreign languages, with accuracy or correctness; nor had the monks of Brienne any reason to pride themselves on the classical proficiency of their scholar. The full energies of his mind being devoted to the scientific pursuits of his profession, left little time or inclination for other studies.

Though of Italian origin, Buonaparte had not a decided taste for the fine arts, and his taste in composition seems to have leaned towards the grotesque and the bombastic. He used always the most exaggerated phrases; and it is seldom, if ever, that his bulletins present those touches of sublimity which are founded on dignity and simplicity of expression.

Notwithstanding the external calmness and reserve of his deportment, he who was destined for such great things, had, while yet a student at Brienne, a full share of that ambition for distinction and dread of disgrace, that restless and irritating love of fame, which is the spur to extraordinary attempts. Sparkles of this keen temper sometimes showed themselves. On one occasion, a harsh superintendant imposed on the future Emperor, for some trifling fault, the disgrace of wearing a penitential dress, and being excluded from the table of the students, and obliged to eat his meal

Digitized by Google

apart. His pride felt the indignity so severely, that it brought on a severe nervous attack; to which, though otherwise of good constitution, he was subject upon occasions of extraordinary irritation. Father Petrault, the Professor of Mathematics, hastened to deliver his favourite pupil from the punishment by which he was so much affected.

It is also said that an early disposition to the popular side distinguished Buonaparte even when at Brienne. Pichegru, afterwards so celebrated, who acted as his monitor in the military school, (a singular circumstance,) bore witness to his early principles, and to the peculiar energy and tenacity of his temper. He was long afterwards consulted whether means might not be found to engage the commander of the Italian armies in the royal interest. "It will be but lost time to attempt it," said Pichegru. "I knew him in his youth—his character is inflexible—he has taken his side, and he will not change it."

In 1783, Napoleon Buonaparte, then only fourteen years old, was, though under the usual age, selected by Monsieur de Keralio, the inspector of the twelve military schools, to be sent to have his education completed in the general school of Paris. It was a compliment paid to the precocity of his extraordinary mathematical talent, and the steadiness of his application. While at Paris he attracted the same notice as at Brienne; and among other society, frequented that of the celebrated Abbé Raynal, and was admit-



Digitized by Google

ted to his literary parties. His taste did not become correct, but his appetite for study in all departments was greatly enlarged; and notwithstanding the quantity which he daily read, his memory was strong enough to retain, and his judgment sufficiently ripe to arrange and digest, the knowledge which he then acquired; so that he had it at his command during all the rest of his busy life. Plutarch was his favourite author; upon the study of whom he had so modelled his opinions and habits of thought, that Paoli afterwards pronounced him a young man of an antique caste, and resembling one of the classical heroes.

Some of his biographers have about this time ascribed to him the anecdote of a certain youthful pupil of the military school, who desired to ascend in the car of a balloon with the aeronaut Blanchard, and was so mortified at being refused, that he made an attempt to cut the balloon with his sword. The story has but a flimsy support, and indeed does not accord well with the character of the hero, which was deep and reflective, as well as bold and determined, and not likely to suffer its energies to escape in idle and useless adventure.

A better authenticated anecdote states, that at this time he expressed himself disrespectfully towards the King in one of his letters to his family. According to the practice of the school, he was obliged to submit the letter to the censorship of Monsieur Domairon, the Professor of Belles Lettres, who, taking no-



Digitized by Google

tice of the offensive passage, insisted upon the letter being burnt, and added a severe rebuke. Long afterwards, in 1802, Monsieur Domairon was commanded to attend Napoleon's levee, in order that he might receive a pupil in the person of Jerome Buonaparte; when the First Consul reminded his old tutor good-humouredly, that times had changed considerably since the burning of the letter.

Napoleon Buonaparte, in his seventeenth year, received his first commission as second lieutenant in a regiment of artillery, and was almost immediately afterwards promoted to the rank of first lieutenant in the corps quartered at Valance. He mingled with society when he joined his regiment, more than he had hitherto been accustomed to do; mixed in public amusements, and exhibited the powers of pleasing which he possessed in an uncommon degree, when he chose to exert them. His handsome and intelligent features, with his active and neat, though slight figure, gave him additional advantages. His manners could scarcely be called elegant, but made up in vivacity and variety of expression, and often in great spirit and energy, for what they wanted in grace and polish.

He became an adventurer for the honours of literature also, and was anonymously a competitor for the prize offered by the Academy of Lyons on Raynal's



Digitized by Google

question, "What are the principles and institutions, by application of which mankind can be raised to the highest pitch of happiness?" The prize was adjudged to the young soldier. It is impossible to avoid feeling curiosity to know the character of the juvenile theories respecting government, advocated by one who at length attained the power of practically making what experiments he pleased. Probably his early ideas did not exactly coincide with his more mature practice; for when Talleyrand, many years afterwards, got the Essay out of the records of the Academy, and returned it to the author, Buonaparte destroyed it after he had read a few pages. He also laboured under the temptation of writing a journey to Mount Cenis, after the manner of Sterne, which he was fortunate enough finally to resist. The affectation which pervades Sterne's peculiar style of composition, was not likely to be simplified under the pen of Buonaparte.

Sterner times were fast approaching, and the nation was now fully divided by those factions which produced the Revolution. The officers of Buonaparte's regiment were also divided into Royalists and Patriots; and it is easily to be imagined, that the young and friendless stranger and adventurer should adopt that side to which he had already shown some inclination, and which promised to open the most free career to those who had only their merit

Digitized by Google

to rely upon. "Were I a general officer," he is alleged to have said, "I would have adhered to the King; being a subaltern, I join the Patriots."

There was a story current, that in a debate with some brother officers on the politics of the time, Buonaparte expressed himself so outrageously, that they were provoked to throw him into the Rhone, where he had nearly perished. But this is an inaccurate account of the accident which actually befell him. He was seized with the cramp when bathing in the river. His comrades saved him with difficulty, but his danger was matter of pure chance.

Napoleon has himself recorded that he was a warm patriot during the whole sitting of the National Assembly; but that on the appointment of the Legislative Assembly, he became shaken in his opinions. If so, his original sentiments regained force; for we shortly afterwards find him entertaining such as went to the extreme heights of the Revolution.

Early in the year 1792, Buonaparte became a captain in the artillery by seniority; and in the same year, being at Paris, he witnessed the two insurrections of the 20th June and 10th August. He was accustomed to speak of the insurgents as the most despicable banditti, and to express with what ease a determined officer could have checked these apparently formidable, but dastardly and unwieldy masses. But with what a different feeling of into-

Digitized by Google

rest would Napoleon have looked on that infuriated populace, those still resisting though overpowered Swiss, and that burning palace, had any seer whispered to him, "Emperor that shall be, all this blood and massacre is but to prepare your future empire!" Little anticipating the potent effect which the passing events were to bear on his own fortune, Buonaparte, anxious for the safety of his mother and family, was now desirous to exchange France for Corsica, where the same things were acting on a less distinguished stage.

It was a singular feature in the French Revolution, that it brought out from his retirement the celebrated Pascal Paoli, who, long banished from Corsica, the freedom and independence of which he had so valiantly defended, returned from exile with the flattering hope of still witnessing the progress of liberty in his native land. On visiting Paris, he was received there with enthusiastic veneration, and the National Assembly and Royal Family contended which should show him most distinction. He was created President of the Department, and Commander of the National Guard of his native island, and used the powers intrusted to him with great wisdom and patriotism.

But Paoli's views of liberty were different from those which unhappily began to be popular in France. He was desirous of establishing that freedom, which

Digitized by Google

is the protector, not the destroyer of property, and which confers practical happiness, instead of aiming at theoretical perfection. In a word, he endeavoured to keep Corsica free from the prevailing infection of Jacobinism; and in reward, he was denounced in the Assembly. Paoli, summoned to attend for the purpose of standing on his defence, declined the journey on account of his age, but offered to withdraw from the island.

A large proportion of the inhabitants took part with the aged champion of their freedom, while the Convention sent an expedition, at the head of which were La Combe, Saint Michel, and Salicetti, one of the Corsican deputies to the Convention, with the usual instructions for bloodshed and pillage issued to their commissaries.

Buonaparte was in Corsica, upon leave of absence from his regiment, when these events were taking place; and although he himself, and Paoli, had hitherto been on friendly terms, and some family relations existed between them, the young artillery officer did not hesitate which side to choose. He embraced that of the Convention with heart and hand; and his first military exploit was in the civil war of his native island. In the year 1793, he was dispatched from Bastia, in possession of the French party, to surprise his native town Ajaccio, then occupied by Paoli or his adherents. Buonaparte was

Digitized by Google

acting provisionally, as commanding a battalion of National Guards. He landed in the Gulf of Ajaccio with about fifty men, to take possession of a tower called the Torre di Capitello, on the opposite side of the gulf, and almost facing the city. He succeeded in taking the place; but as there arose a gale of wind which prevented his communicating with the frigate which had put him ashore, he was besieged in his new conquest by the opposite faction, and reduced to such distress, that he and his little garrison were obliged to feed on horse-flesh. After five days he was relieved by the frigate, and evacuated the tower, having first in vain attempted to blow it up. The Torre di Capitello still shows marks of the damage it then sustained, and its remains may be looked on as a curiosity, as the first scene of *his* combats, before whom

> ——— "Temple and tower
> Went to the ground———"*

A relation of Napoleon, Masserio by name, effectually defended Ajaccio against the force employed in the expedition.

---

* Such is the report of the Corsicans, concerning the alleged first exploit of their celebrated countryman. See Benson's Sketches, p. 4. But there is room to believe that Buonaparte had been in action so early as February 1793. Admiral Truguet, with a strong fleet, and having on board a large body of troops, had been at anchor for

Digitized by Google

The strength of Paoli increasing, and the English preparing to assist him, Corsica became no longer a safe or convenient residence for the Buonaparte family. Indeed, both Napoleon and his brother Lucien, who had distinguished themselves as partisans of the French, were subjected to a decree of banishment from their native island; and Madame Buonaparte, with her three daughters, and Jerome, who was as yet but a child, set sail under their protection, and settled for a time, first at Nice, and afterwards at Marseilles, where the family is supposed to have undergone considerable distress, until the dawning prospects of Napoleon afforded him the means of assisting them.

Napoleon never again revisited Corsica, nor does he appear to have regarded it with any feelings of affection. One small fountain at Ajaccio is pointed out as the only ornament which his bounty bestowed on his birth-place. He might perhaps think it impolitic to do anything which might remind the country he ruled that he was not a child of her soil, nay,

---

several weeks in the Corsican harbours, announcing a descent upon Sardinia. At length, having received on board an additional number of forces, he set sail on his expedition. Buonaparte is supposed to have accompanied the Admiral, of whose talent and judgment he is made in the Saint Helena MSS. to speak with great contempt. Buonaparte succeeded in taking some batteries in the straits of Saint Bonifacio; but the expedition proving unsuccessful, they were speedily abandoned.

Digitized by Google

was in fact very near having been born an alien, for Corsica was not united to, or made an integral part of France, until June 1769, a few weeks only before Napoleon's birth. This stigma was repeatedly cast upon him by his opponents, some of whom reproached the French with having adopted a master, from a country from which the ancient Romans were unwilling even to choose a slave; and Napoleon may have been so far sensible to it, as to avoid showing any predilection to the place of his birth, which might bring the circumstance strongly under observation of the great nation, with which he and his family seemed to be indissolubly united. But, as a traveller already quoted, and who had the best opportunities to become acquainted with the feelings of the proud islanders, has expressed it,—"The Corsicans are still highly patriotic, and possess strong local attachment—in their opinion, contempt for the country of one's birth is never to be redeemed by any other qualities. Napoleon, therefore, certainly was not popular in Corsica, nor is his memory cherished there."*

The feelings of the parties were not unnatural on either side. Napoleon, little interested in the land of his birth, and having such an immense stake in that of his adoption, in which he had everything to keep

* Benson's Sketches of Corsica, p. 121.

Digitized by Google

and lose,* observed a policy towards Corsica which his position rendered advisable; and who can blame the high-spirited islanders, who, seeing one of their countrymen raised to such exalted eminence, and disposed to forget his connexion with them, returned with slight and indifference the disregard with which he treated them?

---

* Not literally, however; for it is worth mentioning, that when he was in full-blown possession of his power, an inheritance fell to the family situated near Ajaccio, and was divided amongst them. The first Consul, or Emperor, received an olive garden as his share. —*Sketches of Corsica.*

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER II.

*Siege of Toulon.—Recapitulation.—Buonaparte appointed Brigadier-General of Artillery, with the Command of the Artillery at Toulon—Finds everything in disorder—His Plan for obtaining the Surrender of the Place—Adopted.—Anecdotes during the Siege.—Allied Troops resolve to evacuate Toulon—Dreadful Particulars of the Evacuation—England censured on this occasion.—Lord Lynedoch.—Fame of Buonaparte increases, and he is appointed Chief of Battalion in the Army of Italy—Joins Head-quarters at Nice.—On the Fall of Robespierre, Buonaparte superseded in command—Arrives in Paris in May 1795 to solicit employment—He is unsuccessful.—Talma.—Retrospect of the Proceedings of the National Assembly.—Difficulties in forming a new Constitution.—Appointment of the Directory—of the Two Councils of Elders and of Five Hundred.—Nation at large, and Paris in particular, disgusted with their pretensions.—Paris assembles in Sections.—General Danican appointed their Commander-in-Chief.—Menou appointed by the Directory to disarm the National Guards—but suspended for incapacity—Buonaparte appointed in his room.—The Day of the Sections.—Conflict betwixt the Troops of the Convention under Buonaparte, and those of the Sections of Paris under Danican.—The latter defeated with much slaughter.—Buonaparte appointed Second in Command of the Army of the Interior—then General in Chief—Marries Madame Beauharnois—Her Character.—Buonaparte immediately afterwards joins the Army of Italy.*

THE siege of Toulon was the first incident of importance, which enabled Buonaparte to distinguish himself in the eyes of the French government, and of the world at large.

Digitized by Google

We have already mentioned that a general diffidence, and dread of the proceedings of the Jacobins, joined to the intrigues of the Girondists, had, after the fall of the latter party, induced several of the principal towns in France to take arms against the Convention, or rather against the Jacobin party, who had attained the complete mastery in that body. We have also said that Toulon, taking a more decided step than either Marseilles or Lyons, had declared for the King and the Constitution of 1791, and invited the support of the English and Spanish squadrons, who were cruizing upon the coast. A disembarkation was made, and a miscellaneous force, hastily collected, of Spaniards, Sardinians, Neapolitans, and English, was thrown into the place.

This was one of the critical periods when vigorous measures, on the part of the allies, might have produced marked effects on the result of the war. Toulon is the arsenal of France, and contained at that time immense naval stores, besides a fleet of seventeen sail of the line ready for sea, and thirteen or fourteen more, which stood in need of refitting. The possession of it was of the last importance, and with a sufficiently large garrison, or rather an army strong enough to cover the more exposed points without the town, the English might have maintained their footing at Toulon, as they did at a later period both at Lisbon and Cadiz. The sea would, by maintaining the defensive lines necessary to protect the road-

Digitized by Google

stead, have been entirely at the command of the besieged; and they could have been supplied with provisions in any quantity from Sicily, or the Barbary States, while the besiegers would have experienced great difficulty, such was the dearth in Provence at the time, in supporting their own army. But to have played this bold game, the presence of an army, instead of a few battalions, would have been requisite; and a general of consummate ability must have held the chief command. This was the more especially necessary, as Toulon, from the nature of the place, must have been defended by a war of posts, requiring peculiar alertness, sagacity, and vigilance. On the other hand, there were circumstances very favourable for the defence, had it been conducted with talent and vigour. In order to invest Toulon on the right and left side at once, it was necessary there should be two distinct blockading armies; and these could scarce communicate with each other, as a steep ridge of mountains, called Pharon, must interpose betwixt them. This gave opportunity to the besieged to combine their force, and choose the object of attack when they sallied; while, on the other hand, the two bodies of besiegers could not easily connect their operations, either for attack or defence.

Lord Mulgrave, who commanded personally in the place, notwithstanding the motley character of the garrison, and other discouraging circumstances, began the defence with spirit. Sir George Keith El-

Digitized by Google

phinstone also defeated the Republicans at the mountain-pass, called Ollioulles. The English for some time retained possession of this important gorge, but were finally driven out from it. Cartaux, a republican general whom we have already mentioned, now advanced on the west of Toulon, at the head of a very considerable army, while General Lapoype blockaded the city on the east, with a part of the army of Italy. It was the object of the French to approach Toulon on both sides of the mountainous ridge, called Pharon. But on the east the town was covered by the strong and regular fort of La Malgue, and on the west side of the road by a less formidable work, called Malbosquet. To support Malbosquet, and to protect the entrance to the roadstead and the harbour, the English engineers fortified with great skill an eminence, called Hauteur de Grasse. The height bent into a sort of bay, the two promontories of which were secured by redoubts, named L'Eguillotte and Balagniere, which communicated with and supported the new fortification, which the English had termed Fort Mulgrave.

Several sallies and skirmishes took place, in most of which the republicans were worsted. Lieutenant-General O'Hara arrived from Gibraltar with reinforcements, and assumed the chief command.

Little could be said for the union of the commanders within Toulon; yet their enterprises were so far successful, that the French began to be alarmed

Digitized by Google

at the slow progress of the siege. The dearth of provisions was daily increasing, the discontent of the people of Provence was augmented; the Catholics were numerous in the neighbouring districts of Vivarais and Lower Languedoc; and Barras and Freron wrote from Marseilles to the Convention, suggesting that the siege of Toulon should be raised,* and the besieging army withdrawn beyond the Durance. But while weaker minds were despairing, talents of the first order were preparing to achieve the conquest of Toulon.

Buonaparte, since his return from Corsica, seems to have enjoyed some protection from his countryman Sallicetti, the only one of the Corsican deputies who voted for the King's death, and a person to whom the young artillery officer had been known during the civil war of his native island. Napoleon had shown that his own opinions were formed on the model of the times, by a small Jacobin publication, called *Le Souper de Beaucaire*, a political dialogue between Marat and a Federalist, in which the latter is overwhelmed and silenced by the arguments and eloquence of the Friend of the People. Of this juvenile production Buonaparte was afterwards so much ashamed, that he caused the copies to be col-

* This letter appeared in the Moniteur, 10th December 1793. But as the town of Toulon was taken a few days afterwards, the Convention voted the letter a fabrication.

Digitized by Google

lected and destroyed with the utmost rigour, so that it is now almost impossible to meet with one. It is whimsical to observe, that, in the manuscripts of Saint Helena, he mentions this publication as one in which he assumed the mask of Jacobin principles, merely to convince the Girondists and Royalists that they were choosing an unfit time for insurrection, and attempting it in a hopeless manner. He adds, that it made many converts.

Buonaparte's professional qualifications were still better vouched than the soundness of his political principles, though these were sufficiently decided. The notes which the inspectors of the Military School always preserve concerning their scholars, described his genius as being of the first order; and to these he owed his promotion to the rank of a brigadier-general of artillery, with the command of the artillery during the siege of Toulon.

When he had arrived at the scene of action, and had visited the posts of the besieging army, he found so many marks of incapacity, that he could not conceal his astonishment. Batteries had been erected for destroying the English shipping, but they were three gun-shots' distance from the point which they were designed to command; red-hot balls were preparing, but they were not heated in furnaces beside the guns, but in the country-houses in the neighbourhood at the most ridiculous distance, as if they had been articles of



Digitized by Google

easy and ordinary transportation. Buonaparte with difficulty obtained General Cartaux's permission to make a shot or two by way of experiment; and when they fell more than half-way short of the mark, the General had no excuse but to rail against the aristocrats, who had, he said, spoiled the quality of the powder with which he was supplied.

The young officer of artillery, with prudence, and at the same time with spirit, made his remonstrances to the member of Convention, Gasparin, who witnessed the experiment, and explained the necessity of proceeding more systematically, if any successful result was expected.

At a council of war, where Gasparin presided, the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety were read, directing that the siege of Toulon should be commenced according to the usual forms, by investing the body of the place, in other words, the city itself. The orders of the Committee of Public Safety were no safe subject of discussion or criticism for those who were to act under them; yet Buonaparte ventured to recommend their being departed from on this important occasion. His comprehensive genius had at once discovered a less direct, yet more certain manner, of obtaining the surrender of the place. He advised, that, neglecting the body of the town, the attention of the besiegers should be turned to attain possession of the promontory called Hauteur de



Digitized by Google

Grasse, by driving the besiegers from the strong work of Fort Mulgrave, and the two redoubts of L'Eguillette and Balagniere, by means of which the English had established the line of defence necessary to protect the fleet and harbour. The fortress of Malbosquet, on the same point, he also recommended as a principal object of attack. He argued, that if the besiegers succeeded in possessing themselves of these fortifications, they must obtain a complete command of the roads where the English fleet lay, and oblige them to put to sea. They would, in the same manner, effectually command the entrance of the bay, and prevent supplies or provisions from being thrown into the city. If the garrison were thus in danger of being totally cut off from supplies by their vessels being driven from their anchorage, it was natural to suppose that the English troops would rather evacuate Toulon, than remain within the place, blockaded on all sides, until they might be compelled to surrender by famine.

The plan was adopted by the council of war after much hesitation, and the young officer by whom it was projected received full powers to carry it on. He rallied round him a number of excellent artillery officers and soldiers; assembled against Toulon more than two hundred pieces of cannon, well served; and stationed them so advantageously, that he annoyed considerably the English vessels in the roads, even



Digitized by Google

before he had constructed those batteries on which he depended for reducing Fort Mulgrave and Malbosquet, by which they were in a great measure protected.

In the meanwhile, General Doppet, formerly a physician, had superseded Cartaux, whose incapacity could no longer be concealed by his rhodomontading language; and, wonderful to tell, it had nearly been the fate of the ex-doctor to take Toulon, at a time when such an event seemed least within his calculation. A tumultuary attack of some of the young French Carmagnoles on a body of Spanish troops which garrisoned Fort Mulgrave, had very nearly been successful. Buonaparte galloped to the spot, hurrying his reluctant commander along with him, and succours were ordered to advance to support the attack, when an aid-de-camp was shot by Doppet's side; on which the medical general, considering this as a bad symptom, pronounced the case desperate, and, to Buonaparte's great indignation, ordered a retreat to be commenced. Doppet being found as incapable as Cartaux, was in his turn superseded by Dugommier, a veteran who had served for fifty years, was covered with scars, and as fearless as the weapon he wore.

From this time the Commandant of Artillery, having the complete concurrence of his General, had no doubt of success. To ensure it, however, he used

Digitized by Google

the utmost vigilance and exertion, and exposed his person to every risk.

One of the dangers which he incurred was of a singular character. An artilleryman being shot at the gun which he was serving, while Napoleon was visiting a battery, he took up the dead man's rammer, and, to give encouragement to the soldiers, charged the gun repeatedly with his own hands. In consequence of using this implement he caught an infectious cutaneous complaint, which, being injudiciously treated and thrown inward, was of great prejudice to his health, until after his Italian campaigns, when he was completely cured by Dr Corvissart; after which, for the first time, he showed that tendency to *embonpoint*, which marked the latter part of his life.

Upon another occasion, while Napoleon was overlooking the construction of a battery, which the enemy endeavoured to interrupt by their fire, he called for some person who could write, that he might dictate an order. A young soldier stepped out of the ranks, and resting the paper on the breast-work, began to write accordingly. A shot from the enemy's battery covered the letter with earth the instant it was finished. "Thank you—we shall have no occasion for sand this bout," said the military secretary. The gaiety and courage of the remark drew Buonaparte's attention on the young man, who was the celebrated General Junot, afterwards created Duke D'Abrantes.

Digitized by Google

During this siege, also, he discovered the talents of Duroc, afterwards one of his most faithful adherents. In these and many other instances, Buonaparte showed his extensive knowledge of mankind, by the deep sagacity which enabled him to discover and attach to him those, whose talents were most distinguished, and most capable of rendering him service.

Notwithstanding the influence which the Commandant of Artillery had acquired, he found himself occasionally thwarted by the members of the Convention upon mission to the siege of Toulon, who latterly were Freron, Ricors, Salicetti, and the younger Robespierre. These representatives of the people, knowing that their commission gave them supreme power over generals and armies, never seem to have paused to consider whether nature or education had qualified them to exercise it, with advantage to the public and credit to themselves. They criticised Buonaparte's plan of attack, finding it impossible to conceive how his operations, being directed against detached fortifications at a distance from Toulon, could be eventually the means of placing the town itself with facility in their hands. But Napoleon was patient and temporising; and having the good opinion of Salicetti, and some intimacy with young Robespierre, he contrived to have the works conducted according to his own plan.

The presumption of these dignitaries became the means of precipitating his operations. It was his

Digitized by Google

intention to complete his proposed works against Fort Mulgrave before opening a large and powerful battery, which he had constructed with great silence and secresy against Malbosquet, so that the whole of his meditated assault might confound the enemy by commencing at the same time. The operations being shrouded by an olive plantation, had been completed without being observed by the English, whom Buonaparte proposed to attack on the whole line of defence simultaneously. Messrs Freron and Robespierre, however, in visiting the military posts, stumbled upon this masked battery; and having no notion why four mortars and eight twenty-four pounders should remain inactive, they commanded the fire to be opened on Malbosquet without any farther delay.

General O'Hara, confounded at finding this important post exposed to a fire so formidable and unexpected, determined by a strong effort to carry the French battery at once. Three thousand men were employed in this sally; and the General himself, rather contrary to what is considered the duty of the governor of a place of importance, resolved to put himself at their head. The sally was at first completely successful; but while the English pursued the enemy too far, in all the confidence of what they considered as assured victory, Buonaparte availed himself of some broken ground and a covered way, to rally a strong body of troops, bring up reserves, and attack

Digitized by Google

the scattered English both in flank and rear. There was a warm skirmish, in which Napoleon himself received a bayonet wound in the thigh, by which, though a serious injury, he was not, however, disabled. The English were thrown into irretrievable confusion, and retreated, leaving their General wounded, and a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. It is singular, that during his long warfare, Buonaparte was never personally engaged with the British, except in his first, and at Waterloo, his last and fatal battle. The attack upon Acre can scarce be termed an exception, as far as his own person was concerned.

The loss of their commandant, added to the discouragement which began to prevail among the defenders of Toulon, together with the vivacity of the attack which ensued, seem finally to have disheartened the garrison. Five batteries were opened on Fort Mulgrave, the possession of which Buonaparte considered as ensuring success. After a fire of twenty-four hours, Dugommier and Napoleon resolved to try the fate of a general attack, for which the representatives of the people showed no particular zeal. The attacking columns advanced before day, during a heavy shower of rain. They were at first driven back on every point by the most determined opposition; and Dugommier, as he saw the troops fly in confusion, exclaimed, well knowing the consequences of bad success to a General of the Republic, "I am a lost man!" Renewed efforts, however, at

Digitized by Google

last prevailed; the Spanish artillerymen giving way on one point, the fort fell into the possession of the French, who showed no mercy to its defenders.

Three hours, according to Buonaparte, after the fort was taken, the representatives of the people appeared in the trenches, with drawn swords, to congratulate the soldiers on their successful valour, and hear from their Commandant of Artillery, the reiterated assurance, that, this distant fort being gained, Toulon was now their own. In their letter to the Convention, the deputies gave a more favourable account of their own exploits, and failed not to represent Ricors, Salicetti, and young Robespierre, as leading the attack with sabre in hand, and, to use their own phrase, showing the troops the road to victory. On the other hand, they ungraciously forgot, in their dispatches, to mention so much as the name of Buonaparte, to whom the victory was entirely to be ascribed.

In the meantime, Napoleon's sagacity was not deceived in the event. The officers of the allied troops, after a hurried council of war, resolved to evacuate Toulon, since the posts gained by the French must drive the English ships from their anchorage, and deprive them of a future opportunity of retreating, if they neglected the passing moment. Lord Hood alone urged a bolder resolution, and recommended the making a desperate effort to regain Fort Mulgrave, and the heights which it commanded. But his spirit-

Digitized by Google

ed counsel was rejected, and the evacuation resolved on; which the panic of the foreign troops, especially the Neapolitans, would have rendered still more horrible than it proved, but for the steadiness of the British seamen.

The safety of the unfortunate citizens, who had invoked their protection, was not neglected even amid the confusion of the retreat. The numerous merchant vessels and other craft, offered means of transportation to all, who, having to fear the resentment of the republicans, might be desirous of quitting Toulon. Such was the dread of the victors' cruelty, that upwards of fourteen thousand persons accepted this melancholy refuge. Meantime there was other work to do.

It had been resolved, that the arsenal and naval stores, with such of the French ships as were not ready for sea, should be destroyed; and they were set on fire accordingly. This task was in a great measure intrusted to the dauntless intrepidity of Sir Sydney Smith, who carried it through with a degree of order, which, everything considered, was almost marvellous. The assistance of the Spaniards was offered and accepted; and they undertook the duty of scuttling and sinking two vessels used as powder magazines, and destroying some part of the disabled shipping. The rising conflagration growing redder and redder, seemed at length a great volcano, amid which were long distinctly seen the

Digitized by Google

masts and yards of the burning vessels, and which rendered obscurely visible the advancing bodies of republican troops, who attempted on different points to push their way into the place. The Jacobins began to rise in the town upon the flying Royalists;—horrid screams and yells of vengeance, and revolutionary choruses, were heard to mingle with the cries and plaintive entreaties of the remaining fugitives, who had not yet found means of embarkation. The guns from Malbosquet, now possessed by the French, and turned on the bulwarks of the town, increased the uproar. At once a shock, like that of an earthquake, occasioned by the explosion of many hundred barrels of gunpowder, silenced all noise save its own, and threw high into the midnight heaven a thousand blazing fragments, which descended, threatening ruin wherever they fell. A second explosion took place, as the other magazine blew up, with the same dreadful effects.

This tremendous addition to the terrors of the scene, so dreadful in itself, was owing to the Spaniards setting fire to those vessels used as magazines, instead of sinking them, according to the plan which had been agreed upon. Either from ill-will, carelessness, or timidity, they were equally awkward in their attempts to destroy the dismantled ships intrusted to their charge, which fell into the hands of the French but little damaged. The British fleet, with the flotilla crowded with fugitives which it escorted, left

Digitized by Google

Toulon without loss, notwithstanding an ill-directed fire maintained on them from the batteries which the French had taken.

It was upon this night of terror, conflagration, tears, and blood, that the star of Napoleon first ascended the horizon; and though it gleamed over many a scene of horror ere it set, it may be doubtful whether its light was ever blended with those of one more dreadful.

The capture of Toulon crushed all the hopes of resistance to the Jacobins, which had been cherished in the south of France. There was a strong distrust excited against England, who was judged only desirous to avail herself of the insurrection of these unhappy citizens to cripple and destroy the naval power of France, without the wish of effectually assisting the Royalists. This was an unjust belief, but it cannot be denied that there were specious grounds for the accusation. The undertaking the protection of a city in such a situation as that of Toulon, if the measure was embraced at all, should have been supported by efforts worthy of the country whose assistance was implored and granted. Such efforts were not made, and the assistance actually afforded was not directed by talent, and was squandered by disunion. The troops showed gallantry; but the leaders, excepting the naval officers, evinced little military skill, or united purpose of defence. One gentleman, then in private life, chancing to be in Toulon at the time,

Digitized by Google

distinguished himself as a volunteer,* and has since achieved a proud career in the British army. Had he, or such as he, been at the head of the garrison, the walls of Toulon might have seen a battle like that of Barossa, and a very different result of the siege might probably have ensued.

So many of the citizens of Toulon concerned in the late resistance had escaped, by the means provided by the English, that republican vengeance could not collect its victims in the usual numbers. Many were shot, however, and it has been said that Buonaparte commanded the artillery, by which, as at Lyons, they were exterminated; and also, that he wrote a letter to Freron and the younger Robespierre, congratulating them and himself on the execution of these aristocrats, and signed Brutus Buonaparte, Sansculotte. If he actually commanded at this execution, he had the poor apology, that he must do so or himself perish; but, had the fact and the letter been genuine, there has been enough of time since his downfall to prove the truth of the accusation, and certainly enough of writers disposed to give these proofs publicity. He himself positively denied the

* Mr Graham of Balgowan, now Lord Lynedoch. He marched out on one of the sorties, and when the affair became hot, seized the musket and cartouch-box of a fallen soldier, and afforded such an example to the troops, as contributed greatly to their gaining the object desired.



Digitized by Google

charge; and alleged that the victims were shot by a detachment of what was called the Revolutionary Army, and not by troops of the line. This we think highly probable. Buonaparte has besides affirmed, that far from desiring to sharpen the vengeance of the Jacobins, or act as their agent, he hazarded the displeasure of those whose frown was death, by interposing his protection to save the unfortunate family of Chabrillant, emigrants and aristocrats, who, being thrown by a storm on the coast of France, shortly after the siege of Toulon, became liable to punishment by the guillotine, but whom he saved by procuring them the means of escape by sea.

In the meanwhile the young General of Artillery was rapidly rising in reputation. The praises which were suppressed by the representatives of the people, were willingly conferred and promulgated by the frank old veteran, Dugommier. Buonaparte's name was placed on the list of those whom he recommended for promotion, with the pointed addition, that, if neglected, he would be sure to force his own way. He was accordingly confirmed in his provisional situation of Chief of Battalion, and appointed to hold that rank in the Army of Italy. Before joining that army, the genius of Napoleon was employed by the Convention in surveying and fortifying the sea-coast of the Mediterranean; a very troublesome task, as it involved many disputes with the local authorities of small towns and villages, and even hamlets, all of whom

Digitized by Google

wished to have batteries erected for their own special protection, without regard to the general safety. It involved him, moreover, as we shall presently see, in some risk with the Convention at home.

The chief of battalion discharged his task scientifically. He divided the necessary fortifications into three classes, distinguishing those designed to protect harbours and roadsteads, from such as were intended to defend anchorages of less consequence, and both from the third class, which were to be placed on proper situations, to prevent insults and partial descents on the coast by an enemy superior at sea. Napoleon dictated to General Gourgaud hints on this subject, which must be of consequence to the sea-coasts which need such military defences.*

Having made his report to the Convention, Buonaparte proceeded to join the head-quarters of the French army, then lying at Nice, straitened considerably and hemmed in by the Sardinians and Austrians, who, after some vain attempts of General Brunet to dislodge them, had remained masters of the Col di Tende, and lower passes of the Alps, together with the road leading from Turin to Nice by Saorgio.

---

* An Englishman will probably remember the sublime passage in "The Mariners of England;"—

Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is on the mountain-wave,
Her home is on the deep.

Digitized by Google

Buonaparte had influence enough to recommend with success to the general, Dumorbion, and the representatives of the people, Ricors and Robespierre, a plan for driving the enemy out of this position, forcing them to retreat beyond the higher Alps, and taking Saorgio; all which measures succeeded as he had predicted. Saorgio surrendered, with much stores and baggage, and the French army obtained possession of the chain of the higher Alps,* which, being tenable by defending few and difficult passes, placed a great part of the Army of Italy, (as it was already termed, though only upon the frontier,) at disposal for actual service. While directing the means of attaining these successes, Buonaparte, at the same time, acquired a complete acquaintance with that Alpine country, in which he was shortly to obtain victories in his own name, not in that of others, who obtained reputation by acting on his suggestions. But while he was thus employed, he was involved in an accusation before the Convention, which, had his reputation been less for approved patriotism, might have cost him dear.

In his plans for the defence of the Mediterranean, Napoleon had proposed repairing an old state prison at Marseilles, called the fort of Saint Nicholas, that it might serve as a powder magazine. This plan his suc-

* The Sardinians were dislodged from the Col di Tende, 7th of May 1794.

Digitized by Google

cessor on the station proceeded to execute, and by doing so, gave umbrage to the patriots, who charged the commandant of artillery then at Marseilles, and superintending the work, with an intention to rebuild this fort, to serve as a Bastille for controlling the good citizens. The officer being summoned to the bar of the Convention, proved that the plan was not his own, but drawn out by Buonaparte. The representatives of the army in Italy, however, not being able to dispense with his services, wrote to the Convention in his behalf, and gave such an account of the origin and purpose of the undertaking, as divested it of all shade of suspicion, even in the suspicious eye of the Committee of Public Safety.

In the remainder of the year 1794, there was little service of consequence in the Army of Italy, and the 9th and 10th Thermidor (27th and 28th July) of that year, brought the downfall of Robespierre, and threatened unfavourable consequences to Buonaparte, who had been the friend of the tyrant's brother, and was understood to have participated in the tone of exaggerated patriotism affected by his party. He endeavoured to shelter himself under his ignorance of the real tendency of the proceedings of those who had fallen; an apology which resolves itself into the ordinary excuse, that he found his late friends had not been the persons he took them for. According to this line of defence, he made all haste to disclaim acces-

Digitized by Google

sion to the political schemes of which they were accused. "I am somewhat affected," he wrote to a correspondent, "at the fate of the younger Robespierre; but had he been my brother, I would have poniarded him with my own hand, had I been aware that he was forming schemes of tyranny."

Buonaparte's disclamations do not seem at first to have been favourably received. His situation was now precarious, and when those members were restored to the Convention, who had been expelled and proscribed by the Jacobins, it became still more so. The reaction of the moderate party, accompanied by horrible recollections of the past, and fears for the future, began now to be more strongly felt, as their numbers in the Convention acquired strength. Those officers who had attached themselves to the Jacobin party, were the objects of their animosity; and besides, they were desirous to purify the armies as far as possible of those whom they considered as their own enemies, and those of good order; the rather, that the jacobinical principles still continued to be more favoured in the armies than in the interior.

To the causes of this we have before alluded; but it may not be unnecessary to repeat, that the soldiers had experienced all the advantages of the fierce energies of a government which sent them out to conquest, and offered them the means of achieving it; and they had not been witnesses to the atrocities of



Digitized by Google

their tyranny in the interior. It was highly desirable to the moderate party to diminish the influence of the Jacobins with the army, by dismissing the officers supposed most friendly to such principles. Buonaparte, among others, was superseded in his command, and for a time detained under arrest. This was removed by means of the influence which his countryman Salicetti still retained among the Thermidoriens, and Buonaparte appears to have visited Marseilles, though in a condition to give or receive little consolation from his family.

In May 1795, he came to Paris to solicit employment in his profession. He found himself unfriended and indigent in the city of which he was at no distant period to be the ruler. Some individuals, however, assisted him, and among others the celebrated performer Talma, who had known him while at the Military School, and even then entertained high expectations of the part in life which was to be played by "*le petit Bonaparte.*" *

On the other hand, as a favourer of the Jacobins, his solicitations for employment were resolutely opposed by a person of considerable influence. Aubry, an old officer of artillery, president of the military committee, placed himself in strong opposition to his pretensions. He had been nominated as removed from

* On the authority of the late John Philip Kemble.



Digitized by Google

the artillery service to be placed in that of the infantry. He remonstrated with great spirit against this proposed change; and when, in the heat of discussion, Aubry objected his youth, Buonaparte replied, that presence in the field of battle ought to anticipate the claim of years. The president, who had not been much in action, considered his reply as a personal insult; and Napoleon, disdaining farther answer, tendered his resignation. It was not, however, accepted; and he still remained in the rank of expectants, but among those whose hopes were entirely dependent upon their merits.

Buonaparte had something of his native country in his disposition—he forgot neither benefits nor injuries. He was always, during the height of his grandeur, particularly kind to Talma, and honoured him even with a degree of intimacy. As for Aubry, being amongst those belonging to Pichegru's party who were banished to Cayenne, he caused him to be excepted from the decree which permitted the return of those unfortunate exiles, and Aubry died at Demarara.

Meantime, his situation becoming daily more unpleasant, Buonaparte solicited Barras and Freron, who, as Thermidoriens, had preserved their credit, for occupation in almost any line of his profession, and even negotiated for permission to go into the Turkish service, to train the Mussulmans to the use of artillery. A fanciful imagination may pursue him to the rank

Digitized by Google

of Pacha, or higher; for, go where he would, he could not have remained in mediocrity. His own ideas had a similar tendency. "How strange," he said, "it would be, if a little Corsican officer of artillery were to become King of Jerusalem!" He was offered a command in La Vendée, which he declined to accept, and was finally named to command a brigade of artillery in Holland. But it was in a land where there still existed so many separate and conflicting factions, as in France, that he was doomed to be raised, amid the struggles of his contending countrymen, and upon their shoulders and over their heads, to the very highest eminence to which fortune can exalt an individual. The times required such talents as his, and the opportunity for exercising them soon arose.

The French nation were in general tired of the National Convention, which successive proscriptions had drained of all the talent, eloquence, and energy, it had once possessed; and that Assembly had become hateful and contemptible to all men, by suffering itself to be the passive tool of the Terrorists for two years, when, if they had shown proper firmness, the revolution of the 9th Thermidor might as well have been achieved at the beginning of that frightful anarchy, as after that long period of unheard-of suffering. The Convention was not greatly improved in point of talent, even by the return of their banished brethren; and, in a word, they had lost the confi-

Digitized by Google

dence of the public entirely. They therefore prepared to gratify the general wish by dissolving themselves.

But before they resigned their ostensible authority, it was necessary to prepare some mode of carrying on the government in future.

The Jacobin constitution of 1793 still existed on paper; but although there was an unrepealed law, menacing with death any one who should propose to alter that form of government, no one appeared disposed to consider it as actually in exercise; and notwithstanding the solemnity with which it had been received and ratified by the sanction of the national voice, it was actually passed over and abrogated as a matter of course, by a tacit but unanimous consent. Neither was there any disposition to adopt the Girondist constitution of 1791, or to revert to the democratic monarchy of 1792, the only one of these models which could be said to have had even the dubious endurance of a few months. As at the general change of the world, all former things were to be done away—all was to be made anew.

Each of these forms of government had been solemnised by the national oaths and processions customary on such occasions; but the opinion was now universally entertained, that not one of them was founded on just principles, or contained the power of defending itself against aggression, and protecting the lives and rights of the subject. On the other hand, every one not deeply interested in the late anarchy, and

Digitized by Google

implicated in the horrid course of bloodshed and tyranny which was its very essence, was frightened at the idea of reviving a government, which was a professed continuation of the despotism ever attendant upon a revolution, and which, in all civilised countries, ought to terminate with the extraordinary circumstances by which revolution has been rendered necessary. To have continued the revolutionary government, indeed, longer than this, would have been to have imitated the conduct of an ignorant empiric, who should persist in subjecting a convalescent patient to the same course of exhausting and dangerous medicines, which a regular physician would discontinue as soon as the disease had been brought to a favourable crisis.

It seems to have been in general felt and admitted, that the blending of the executive and legislative power together, as both had been exercised by the existing Convention, opened the road to the most afflicting tyranny; and that to constitute a stable government, the power of executing the laws, and administering the ministerial functions, must be vested in some separate individuals, or number of individuals, who should, indeed, be responsible to the national legislature for the exercise of this power, but neither subject to their direct control, nor enjoying it as emanating immediately from their body. With these reflections arose others, on the utility of dividing the Legislative Body itself into two assemblies, one of which

Digitized by Google

might form a check on the other, tending, by some exercise of an intermediate authority, to qualify the rash rapidity of a single Chamber, and obstruct the progress of any individual, who might, like Robespierre, obtain a dictatorship in such a body, and become, in doing so, an arbitrary tyrant over the whole authorities of the state. Thus, loath and late, the French began to cast an eye on the British constitution, and the system of checks and balances upon which it is founded, as the best means of uniting the protection of liberty with the preservation of order. Thinking men had come gradually to be aware, that in hopes of getting something better than a system which had been sanctioned by the experience of ages, they had only produced a set of models, which were successively wondered at, applauded, neglected, and broken to pieces, instead of a simple machine, capable, in mechanical phrase, of working well.

Had such a feeling prevailed during the commencement of the Revolution, as was advocated by Mounier and others, France and Europe might have been spared the bloodshed and distress which afflicted them during a period of more than twenty years of war, with all the various evils which accompanied that great convulsion. France had then a king; nobles, out of whom a senate might have been selected; and abundance of able men to have formed a Lower House, or House of Commons. But the golden opportunity was passed over; and when the architects

Digitized by Google

might, perhaps, have been disposed to execute the new fabric which they meditated, on the plan of a limited monarchy, the materials for the structure were no longer to be found.

The legitimate King of France no doubt existed, but he was an exile in a foreign country; and the race of gentry, from whom a house of peers, or hereditary senate, might have been chiefly selected, were to be found only in foreign service, too much exasperated by their sufferings to admit a rational hope that they would ever make any compromise with those who had forced them from their native land, and confiscated their family property. Saving for these circumstances, and the combinations which arose out of them, it seems very likely, that at the period at which we have now arrived, the tide, which began to set strongly against the Jacobins, might have been adroitly turned in favour of the Bourbons. But though there was a general feeling of melancholy regret, which naturally arose from comparing the peaceful days of the Monarchy with those of the Reign of Terror,—the rule of Louis the XVI. with that of Robespierre,—the memory of former quiet and security with the more recent recollections of blood and plunder,—still it seems to have existed rather in the state of a predisposition to form a royal party, than as the principle of one already existing. Fuel was lying ready to catch the flame of loyalty, but the match had not yet been

Digitized by Google

applied; and to counteract this general tendency, there existed the most formidable obstacles.

In the first place, we have shown already the circumstances by which the French armies were strongly attached to the name of the Republic, in whose cause all their wars had been waged, and all their glory won; by whose expeditious and energetic administration the military profession was benefited, while they neither saw nor felt the misery entailed on the nation at large. But the French soldier had not only fought in favour of Democracy, but actively and directly against Royalty. As *Vive la Republique* was his war-cry, he was in La Vendée, on the Rhine, and elsewhere, met, encountered, and sometimes defeated and driven back, by those who used the opposite signal-word, *Vive le Roi*. The Royalists were, indeed, the most formidable opponents of the military part of the French nation; and such was the animosity of the latter at this period to the idea of returning to the ancient system, that if a general could have been found capable of playing the part of Monk, he would probably have experienced the fate of La Fayette and Dumouriez.

A second and almost insuperable objection to the restoration of the Bourbons, occurred in the extensive change of property that had taken place. If the exiled family had been recalled, they could not, at this very recent period, but have made stipulations

Digitized by Google

for their devoted followers, and insisted that the estates forfeited in their cause, should have been compensated or restored; and such a resumption would have inferred ruin to all the purchasers of national demesnes, and, in consequence, a general shock to the security of property through the kingdom.

The same argument applied to the church lands. The Most Christian King could not resume his throne, without restoring the ecclesiastical establishment in part, if not in whole. It was impossible to calculate the mass of persons of property and wealth, with their various connexions, who, as possessors of national demesnes, that is, of the property of the church, or of the emigrants, were bound by their own interest to oppose the restoration of the Bourbon family. The revolutionary government had followed the coarse, but striking and deeply politic, admonition of the Scottish Reformer—"Pull down the nests," said Knox, when he urged the multitude to destroy churches and abbeys, "and the rooks will fly off." The French government, by dilapidating and disposing of the property of the emigrants and clergy, had established an almost insurmountable barrier against the return of the original owners. The cavaliers in the great Civil War of England had been indeed fined, sequestrated, impoverished; but their estates were still, generally speaking, in their possession; and they retained, though under oppression and poverty, the influence of a national aristocracy, diminished, but not

Digitized by Google

annihilated. In France, that influence of resident proprietors had all been transferred to other hands, tenacious in holding what property they had acquired, and determined to make good the defence of it against those who claimed a prior right.

Lastly, the fears and conscious recollections of those who held the chief power in France for the time, induced them to view their own safety as deeply compromised by any proposition of restoring the exiled royal family. This present sitting and ruling Convention had put to death Louis XVI.,—with what hope of safety could they install his brother on the throne? They had formally, and in full conclave, renounced belief in the existence of a Deity—with what consistence could they be accessory to restore a national church? Some remained republicans from their heart and upon conviction; and a great many more of the deputies could not abjure democracy, without confessing at the same time, that all the violent measures which they had carried through for the support of that system, were so many great and treasonable crimes.

These fears of a retributive reaction were very generally felt in the Convention. The Thermidoriens, in particular, who had killed Robespierre, and now reigned in his stead, had more substantial grounds of apprehension from any counter-revolutionary movement, than even the body of the Representatives at large, many of whom had been merely passive in scenes

Digitized by Google

where Barras and Tallien had been active agents. The timid party of The Plain might be overawed by the returning Prince; and the members of the Girondists, who could indeed scarce be said to exist as a party, might be safely despised. But the Thermidoriens themselves stood in a different predicament. They were of importance enough to attract both detestation and jealousy; they held power, which must be an object of distrust to the restored Monarch; and they stood on precarious ground, betwixt the hatred of the moderate party, who remembered them as colleagues of Robespierre and Danton, and that of the Jacobins, who saw in Tallien and Barras deserters of that party, and the destroyers of the power of the Sans Culottes. They had, therefore, just reason to fear, that, stripped of the power which they at present possessed, they might become the unpitied and unaided scape-goats, to expiate all the offences of the Revolution.

Thus each favourable sentiment towards the cause of the Bourbons was opposed, I. By their unpopularity with the armies; II. By the apprehensions of the confusion and distress which must arise from a general change of property; and III. By the conscious fears of those influential persons, who conceived their own safety concerned in sustaining the republican model.

Still the idea of monarchy was so generally received as the simplest and best mode of once more re-establishing good order and a fixed government, that

Digitized by Google

some statesmen proposed to resume the form, but change the dynasty. With this view, divers persons were suggested by those, who supposed that by passing over the legitimate heir to the crown, the dangers annexed to his rights and claims might be avoided, and the apprehended measures of resumption and reaction might be guarded against. The son of the Duke of Orleans was named, but the infamy of his father clung to him. In another wild hypothesis, the Duke of York, or the Duke of Brunswick, were suggested as fit to be named constitutional Kings of France. The Abbé Sieyes himself is said to have expressed himself in favour of the prince last named.*

But without regarding the wishes or opinions of the people without doors, the Convention resolved to establish such a model of government as should be most likely to infuse into a republic something of the stability of a monarchial establishment; and thus at once repair former errors, and preserve an appearance of consistency in the eyes of Europe.

For this purpose eleven commissioners, chiefly selected amongst the former Girondists, were appointed to draw up a new constitution upon a new principle, which was to receive anew the universal adhesion of the French by acclamation and oath, and to fall, in a short time, under the same neglect which

* The Memoirs published under the name of Fouché make this assertion. But although that work shows great intimacy with the secret history of the times, it is not to be implicitly relied upon.

Digitized by Google

had attended every preceding model. This, it was understood, was to be so constructed, as to unite the consistency of a monarchial government with the name and forms of a democracy.

That the system now adopted by the French commissioners might bear a form corresponding to the destinies of the nation, and flattering to its vanity, it was borrowed from that of the Roman republic, an attempt to imitate which had already introduced many of the blunders and many of the crimes of the Revolution. The executive power was lodged in a council of five persons, termed Directors, to whom were to be consigned the conduct of peace and war, the execution of the laws, and the general administration of the government. They were permitted no share of the legislative authority.

This arrangement was adopted to comply with the jealousy of those, who, in the individual person of a single Director, holding a situation similar to that of the Stadtholder in Holland, or the President of the United States, saw something too closely approaching to a monarchial government. Indeed, it is said, Louvet warned them against establishing such an office, by assuring them, that when they referred the choice of the individual who was to hold it, to the nation at large, they would see the Bourbon heir elected. But the inconvenience of this pentarchy could not be disguised; and it seemed to follow as a necessary consequence of such a numerous executive council, either

Digitized by Google

that there would be a schism, and a minority and majority established in that pre-eminent body of the state, where unity and vigour were chiefly requisite, or else that some one or two of the ablest and most crafty among the Directors would establish a supremacy over the others, and use them less as their colleagues than their dependants. The legislators, however, though they knew that the whole Roman empire was found insufficient to satiate the ambition of three men, yet appeared to hope that the concord and unanimity of their five Directors might continue unbroken, though they had but one nation to govern; and they decided accordingly.

The executive power being thus provided for, the Legislative Body was to consist of two councils; one of Elders, as it was called, serving as a House of Lords; another of Youngers, which they termed, from its number, the Council of Five Hundred. Both were elective, and the difference of age was the only circumstance which placed a distinction betwixt the two bodies. The members of the Council of Five Hundred were to be at least twenty-five years old, a qualification which, after the seventh year of the Republic, was to rise to thirty years complete. In this assembly laws were to be first proposed; and, having received its approbation, they were to be referred to the Council of Ancients. The requisites to sit in the latter senate, were the age of forty years complete, and the being a married man or a widower.

Digitized by Google

Bachelors, though above that age, were deemed unfit for legislation, perhaps from want of domestic experience.

The Council of Ancients had the power of rejecting the propositions laid before them by the Council of Five Hundred, or, by adopting and approving them, that of passing them into laws. These regulations certainly gained one great point, in submitting each proposed legislative enactment to two separate bodies, and, of course, to mature and deliberate consideration. It is true, that neither of the Councils had any especial character, or separate interest, which could enable or induce the Ancients, as a body, to suggest to the Five Hundred a different principle of considering any proposed measure, from that which was likely to occur to them in their own previous deliberation. No such varied views, therefore, were to be expected, as must arise between assemblies composed of persons who differ in rank or fortune, and consequently view the same question in various and opposite lights. Still, delay and reconsideration were attained, before the irrevocable fiat was imposed upon any measure of consequence; and so far much was gained. An orator was supposed to answer all objections to the system of the two Councils thus constituted, when he described that of the Juniors as being the Imagination, that of the Ancients as being the Judgment of the nation; the one designed to invent and suggest national measures, the other to deliberate and decide upon them.

Digitized by Google

This was, though liable to many objections, an ingenious illustration indeed; but an illustration is not an argument, though often passing current as such.

On the whole, the form of the Constitution of the year 3, *i. e.* 1795, showed a greater degree of practical efficacy, sense, and consistency, than any of those previously suggested; and in the introduction, though there was the usual proclamation of the Rights of Man, his Duties to the laws and to the social system were for the first time enumerated in manly and forcible language, intimating the desire of the framers of these institutions to put a stop to the continuation of revolutionary violence in future.

But the Constitution, now promulgated, had a blemish common to all its predecessors;—it was totally new, and unsanctioned by the experience either of France or any other country; a mere experiment in politics, the result of which could not be known until it had been put in exercise, and which, for many years at least, must be necessarily less the object of respect than of criticism. Wise legislators, even when lapse of time, alteration of manners, or increased liberality of sentiment, require corresponding alterations in the institutions of their fathers, are careful, as far as possible, to preserve the ancient form and character of those laws, into which they are endeavouring to infuse principles and a spirit accommodated to the altered exigencies and temper of the age. There is an enthusiasm in patriotism as well as in religion. We

Digitized by Google

value institutions, not only because they are ours, but because they have been those of our fathers; and if a new Constitution were to be presented to us, although perhaps theoretically showing more symmetry than that by which the nation had been long governed, it would be as difficult to transfer to it the allegiance of the people, as it would be to substitute the worship of a Madonna, the work of modern art, for the devotion paid by the natives of Saragossa to their ancient Palladium, Our Lady of the Pillar.

But the Constitution of the year 3, with all its defects, would have been willingly received by the nation in general, as affording some security from the revolutionary storm, had it not been for a selfish and usurping device of the Thermidoriens to mutilate and render it nugatory at the very outset, by engrafting upon it the means of continuing the exercise of their own arbitrary authority. It must never be forgotten, that these conquerors of Robespierre had shared all the excesses of his party before they became his personal enemies; and that when deprived of their official situations and influence, which they were likely to be by a representative body freely and fairly elected, they were certain to be exposed to great individual danger.

Determined, therefore, to retain the power in their own hands, the Thermidoriens suffered, with an indifference amounting almost to contempt, the Constitu-



Digitized by Google

tion to pass through, and be approved of by, the Convention. But, under pretence that it would be highly impolitic to deprive the nation of the services of men accustomed to public business, they procured two decrees to be passed; the first ordaining the electoral bodies of France to choose, as representatives to the two councils under the new Constitution, at least two-thirds of the members presently sitting in Convention; and the second declaring, that in default of a return of two-thirds of the present deputies, as prescribed, the Convention themselves should fill up the vacancies out of their own body; in other words, should name a large proportion of themselves their own successors in legislative power.

These decrees were sent down to the Primary Assemblies of the people, and every art was used to render them acceptable.

But the nation, and particularly the city of Paris, generally revolted at this stretch of arbitrary authority. They recollected, that all the members who had sat in the first National Assembly, so remarkable for talent, had been declared ineligible, on that single account, for the second Legislative Body; and now, men so infinitely the inferiors of those who were the colleagues of Mirabeau, Mounier, and other great names, presumed not only to declare themselves eligible by re-election, but dared to establish two-thirds of their number as indispensable ingredients of the

Digitized by Google

Legislative Assemblies, which, according to the words alike and spirit of the Constitution, ought to be chosen by the free voice of the people. The electors, and particularly those of the sections of Paris, angrily demanded to know, upon what public services the deputies of the Convention founded their title to a privilege so unjust and anomalous. Among the more active part of them, to whom the measure was chiefly to be ascribed, they saw but a few reformed Terrorists, who wished to retain the power of tyranny, though disposed to exercise it with some degree of moderation, and the loss of whose places might be possibly followed by that of their heads; in the others, they only beheld a flock of timid and discountenanced Helots, willing to purchase personal security at the sacrifice of personal honour and duty to the public; while in the Convention as a body, who pronounced so large a proportion of their number as indispensable to the service of the state, judging from their conduct hitherto, they could but discover an image composed partly of iron, partly of clay, deluged with the blood of many thousand victims—a pageant without a will of its own, and which had been capable of giving its countenance to the worst of actions, at the instigation of the worst of men—a sort of Moloch, whose name had been used by its priests to compel the most barbarous sacrifices. To sum up the whole, these experienced men of public business, without whose intermediation it was pretended the national

Digitized by Google

affairs could not be carried on, could only shelter themselves from the charge of unbounded wickedness, by pleading their unlimited cowardice, and by poorly alleging that for two years they had sat, voted, and deliberated, under a system of compulsion and terror. So much meanness rendered those who were degraded by it unfit, not merely to rule, but to live; and yet two-thirds of their number were, according to their own decrees, to be intruded on the nation as an indispensable portion of its representatives.

Such was the language held in the assemblies of the sections of Paris, who were the more irritated against the domineering and engrossing spirit exhibited in these usurping enactments, because it was impossible to forget that it was their interference, and the protection afforded by their National Guard, which had saved the Convention from massacre on more occasions than one.

In the meanwhile, reports continued to be made from the Primary Assemblies, of their adhesion to the constitution, in which they were almost unanimous, and of their sentiments concerning the two decrees, authorising and commanding the re-election of two-thirds of the Convention, on which there existed a strong difference of opinion. The Convention, determined, at all rates, to carry through with a high hand the iniquitous and arbitrary measure which they proposed, failed not to make these reports such as

Digitized by Google

they desired them to be, and announced that the two decrees had been accepted by a majority of the Primary Assemblies. The citizens of Paris challenged the accuracy of the returns—alleged that the reports were falsified—demanded a scrutiny, and openly bid defiance to the Convention. Their power of meeting together in their sections, on account of the appeal to the people, gave them an opportunity of feeling their own strength, and encouraging each other by speeches and applauses. They were farther emboldened and animated by men of literary talent, whose power was restored with the liberty of the press. Finally, they declared their sittings permanent, and that they had the right to protect the liberties of France. The greater part of the National Guards were united on this occasion against the existing government; and nothing less was talked of, than that they should avail themselves of their arms and numbers, march down to the Tuilleries, and dictate law to the Convention with their muskets, as the revolutionary mob of the suburbs used to do with their pikes.

The Convention, unpopular themselves, and embarked in an unpopular cause, began to look anxiously around for assistance. They chiefly relied on the aid of about five thousand regular troops, who were assembled in and around Paris. These declared for government with the greater readiness, that the insur-

Digitized by Google

rection was of a character decidedly aristocratical, and that the French armies, as already repeatedly noticed, were attached to the Republic. But besides, these professional troops entertained the usual degree of contempt for the National Guards, and on this account alone were quite ready to correct the insolence of the *pekins*,* or *muscadins*,† who usurped the dress and character of soldiers. The Convention had also the assistance of several hundred artillerymen, who, since the taking of the Bastille, had been always zealous democrats. Still apprehensive of the result, they added to this force another of a more ominous description. It was a body of volunteers, consisting of about fifteen hundred men, whom they chose to denominate the Sacred Band, or the Patriots of 1789. They were gleaned out of the suburbs, and from the jails, the remnants of the insurrectional battalions which had formed the body-guard of Hebert and Robespierre, and had been the instruments by which they executed their atrocities. The Convention proclaimed them men of the 10th of August—undoubtedly they were also men of the massacres of September. It was conceived that the beholding such a pack of bloodhounds, ready to be let loose,

---

* *Pekins*, a word of contempt, by which the soldiers distinguished those who did not belong to their profession.

† *Muscadins*, fops—a phrase applied to the better class of *Sans Culottes*.

Digitized by Google

might inspire horror into the citizens of Paris, to whom their very aspect brought so many fearful recollections. It did so, but it also inspired hatred; and the number and zeal of the citizens, compensating for the fury of the Terrorists, and for the superior discipline of the regular troops to be employed against them, promised an arduous and doubtful conflict.

Much, it was obvious, must depend upon the courage and conduct of the leaders.

The sections employed, as their commander-in-chief, General Danican, an old officer of no high reputation for military skill, but otherwise a worthy and sincere man. The Convention at first made choice of Menou, and directed him, supported by a strong military force, to march into the section Le Pelletier, and disarm the National Guards of that district. This section is one of the most wealthy, and of course most aristocratic, in Paris, being inhabited by bankers, merchants, the wealthiest class of tradesmen, and the better orders in general. Its inhabitants had formerly composed the battalion of National Guards des Filles Saint Thomas, the only one which, taking part in the defence of the Tuilleries, shared the fate of the Swiss Guards upon the memorable 10th of August. The section continued to entertain sentiments of the same character, and when Menou appeared at the head of his forces, accompanied by La Porte, a member of the Convention, he found the

Digitized by Google

citizens under arms, and exhibiting such a show of resistance, as induced him, after a parley, to retreat without venturing an attack upon them.

Menou's indecision showed that he was not a man suited to the times, and he was suspended from his command by the Convention, and placed under arrest. The general management of affairs, and the direction of the Conventional forces, was then committed to Barras; but the utmost anxiety prevailed among the members of the committees by whom government was administered, to find a General of nerve and decision enough to act under Barras, in the actual command of the military force, in a service so delicate, and times so menacing. It was then that a few words from Barras, addressed to his colleagues, Carnot and Tallien, decided the fate of Europe for well nigh twenty years. "I have the man," he said, "whom you want; a little Corsican officer, who will not stand upon ceremony."

The acquaintance of Barras and Buonaparte had been, as we have already said, formed at the siege of Toulon, and the former had not forgotten the inventive and decisive genius of the young officer to whom the conquest of that city was to be ascribed. On the recommendation of Barras, Buonaparte was sent for. He had witnessed the retreat of Menou, and explained with much simplicity the causes of that check, and the modes of resistance which ought to be adopt-



Digitized by Google

ed in case of the apprehended attack. His explanations gave satisfaction. Buonaparte was placed at the head of the Conventional forces, and took all the necessary precautions to defend the same palace which he had seen attacked and carried by a body of insurgents on the 10th of August. But he possessed far more formidable means of defence than were in the power of the unfortunate Louis. He had two hundred pieces of cannon, which his high military skill enabled him to distribute to the utmost advantage. He had more than five thousand regular forces, and about fifteen hundred volunteers. He was thus enabled to defend the whole circuit of the Tuilleries; to establish posts in all the avenues by which it could be approached; to possess himself of the bridges, so as to prevent co-operation between the sections which lay on the opposite banks of the river; and finally, to establish a strong reserve in the Place Louis Quinze, or, as it was then called, Place de la Revolution. Buonaparte had only a few hours to make all these arrangements, for he was named in place of Menou late on the night before the conflict.

A merely civic army, having no cannon, (for the field-pieces, of which each section possessed two, had been almost all given up to the Convention after the disarming the suburb of Saint Antoine,) ought to have respected so strong a position as the Tuilleries, when so formidably defended. Their policy should

Digitized by Google

have been, as in the days of Henry II., to have barricaded the streets at every point, and cooped up the Conventional troops within the defensive position they had assumed, till want of provisions obliged them to sally at disadvantage, or to surrender. But a popular force is generally impatient of delay. The retreat of Menou had given them spirit, and they apprehended, with some show of reason, that the sections, if they did not unite their forces, might be attacked and disarmed separately. They therefore resolved to invest the Convention in a hostile manner, require of the members to recall the obnoxious decrees, and allow the nation to make a free and undictated election of its representatives.

On the 13th Vendemaire, corresponding to the 4th October, the civil affray, commonly called the Day of the Sections, took place. The National Guards assembled, to the number of thirty thousand men and upwards, but having no artillery. They advanced by different avenues, in close columns, but everywhere found the most formidable resistance. One large force occupied the quais on the left bank of the Seine, threatening the palace from that side of the river. Another strong division advanced on the Tuilleries, through the street of St Honoré, designing to debouche on the palace, where the Convention was sitting, by the Rue de l'Echelle. They did so, without duly reflecting that they were

Digitized by Google

flanked on most points by strong posts in the lanes and crossings, defended by artillery.

The contest began in the Rue St Honoré. Buonaparte had established a strong post with two guns at the Cul-de-Sac Dauphine, opposite to the Church of St Roche. He permitted the imprudent Parisians to involve their long and dense columns in the narrow street without interruption, until they established a body of grenadiers in the front of the church, and opposite to the position at the Cul-de-Sac. Each party, as usual, throws on the other the blame of commencing the civil contest for which both were prepared. But all agree the firing commenced with musketry. It was instantly followed by discharges of grape-shot and cannister, which, pointed as the guns were, upon thick columns of the National Guards, arranged on the quays and in the narrow streets, made an astounding carnage. The National Guards offered a brave resistance, and even attempted to rush on the artillery, and carry the guns by main force. But a measure which is desperate enough in the open field, becomes impossible when the road to assault lies through narrow streets, which are swept by the cannon at every discharge. The citizens were compelled to give way. By a more judicious arrangement of their respective forces different results might have been hoped; but how could Danican in any circumstances have competed

Digitized by Google

with Buonaparte? The affair, in which several hundred men were killed and wounded, was terminated as a general action in about an hour; and the victorious troops of the Convention, marching into the different sections, completed the dispersion and disarming of their opponents, an operation which lasted till late at night.

The Convention used this victory with the moderation which recollection of the Reign of Terror had inspired. Only two persons suffered death for the Day of the Sections. One of them, La Fond, had been a Garde de Corps, was distinguished for his intrepidity, and repeatedly rallied the National Guard under the storm of grape-shot. Several other persons having fled, were in their absence capitally condemned, but were not strictly looked after; and deportation was the punishment inflicted upon others. The accused were indebted for this clemency chiefly to the interference of those members of Convention, who, themselves exiled on the 31st of May, had suffered persecution, and learned mercy.

The Convention showed themselves at the same time liberal to their protectors. General Berruyer, who commanded the volunteers of 1789, and other general officers employed on the Day of the Sections, were loaded with praises and preferment. But a separate triumph was destined to Buonaparte, as the hero of the day. Five days after the battle, Barras

Digitized by Google

solicited the attention of the Convention to the young officer, by whose prompt and skilful dispositions the Tuilleries had been protected on the 13th Vendemaire, and proposed that they should approve of General Buonaparte's appointment as second in command of the Army of the Interior, Barras himself still remaining commander-in-chief. The proposal was adopted by acclamation. The Convention retained their resentment against Menou, whom they suspected of treachery; but Buonaparte interfering as a mediator, they were content to look over his offence.

After this decided triumph over their opponents, the Convention ostensibly laid down their authority, and retiring from the scene in their present character, appeared upon it anew in that of a Primary Assembly, in order to make choice of such of their members as, by virtue of the decrees of two-thirds, as they were called, were to remain on the stage, as members of the Legislative Councils of Elders and Five Hundred.

After this change of names and dresses, resembling the shifts of a strolling company of players, the two-thirds of the old Convention, with one-third of members newly elected, took upon them the administration of the new constitution. The two re-elected thirds formed a large proportion of the councils, and were, in some respects, much like those

Digitized by Google

unfortunate women, who, gathered from jails and from the streets of the metropolis, have been sometimes sent out to foreign settlements; and, however profligate their former lives may have been, often regain character, and become tolerable members of society, in a change of scene and situation.

The Directory consisted of Barras, Sieyes, Reubel, Latourneur de la Manche, and Reveilliere Lepaux, to the exclusion of Tallien, who was deeply offended. Four of these Directors were reformed Jacobins, or Thermidoriens; the fifth, Reveilliere Lepaux, was esteemed a Girondist. Sieyes, whose taste was rather for speculating in politics than acting in them, declined what he considered a hazardous office, and was replaced by Carnot.

The nature of the insurrection of the Sections was not ostensibly royalist, but several of its leaders were of that party in secret, and, if successful, it would most certainly have assumed that complexion. Thus, the first step of Napoleon's rise commenced by the destruction of the hopes of the House of Bourbon, under the reviving influence of which, twenty years afterwards, he himself was obliged to succumb. But the long path which closed so darkly, was now opening upon him in light and joy. Buonaparte's high services, and the rank which he had obtained, rendered him now a young man of the first hope and expectation, mingling on terms of consideration



Digitized by Google

among the rulers of the state, instead of being regarded as a neglected stranger, supporting himself with difficulty, and haunting public offices and bureaux in vain, to obtain some chance of preferment, or even employment.

From second in command, the new General soon became General-in-chief of the Army of the Interior, Barras having found his duties as a Director were incompatible with those of military command. He employed his genius, equally prompt and profound, in improving the state of the military forces; and, in order to prevent the recurrence of such insurrections as that of the 13th Vendemaire, or Day of the Sections, and as the many others by which it was preceded, he appointed and organized a guard for the protection of the Representative Body.

As the dearth of bread, and other causes of disaffection, continued to produce commotions in Paris, the General of the Interior was sometimes obliged to oppose them with the military force. On one occasion, it is said, that when Buonaparte was anxiously admonishing the multitude to disperse, a very bulky woman exhorted them to keep their ground. "Never mind these coxcombs with the epaulettes," she said; "they do not care if we are all starved, so they themselves feed and get fat."— "Look at me, good woman," said Buonaparte, who was then as thin as a shadow, "and tell me which is

Digitized by Google

the fatter of us two." This turned the laugh against the Amazon, and the rabble dispersed in good-humour. If not among the most distinguished of Napoleon's victories, this is certainly worthy of record, as achieved at the least cost.

Meantime circumstances, which we will relate according to his own statement, introduced Buonaparte to an acquaintance, which was destined to have much influence on his future fate. A fine boy, of ten or twelve years old, presented himself at the levée of the General of the Interior, with a request of a nature unusually interesting. He stated his name to be Eugene Beauharnois, son of the ci-devant Vicomte de Beauharnois, who, adhering to the revolutionary party, had been a general in the Republican service upon the Rhine, and falling under the causeless suspicion of the Committee of Public Safety, was delivered to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and fell by its sentence just four days before the overthrow of Robespierre. Eugene was come to request of Buonaparte, as General of the Interior, that his father's sword might be restored to him. The prayer of the young supplicant was as interesting as his manners were engaging, and Napoleon felt so much interest in him, that he was induced to cultivate the acquaintance of Eugene's mother, afterwards the Empress Josephine.

This lady was a Creolian, the daughter of a planter

Digitized by Google

in St Domingo. Her name at full length was Marie Joseph Rose Tascher de la Pagerie. She had suffered her share of revolutionary miseries. After her husband, General Beauharnois, had been deprived of his command, she was arrested as a suspected person, and detained in prison till the general liberation, which succeeded the revolution of 9th Thermidor. While in confinement, Madame Beauharnois had formed an intimacy with a companion in distress, Madame Fontenai, now Madame Tallien, from which she derived great advantages after her friend's marriage. With a remarkably graceful person, amiable manners, and an inexhaustible fund of good-humour, Madame Beauharnois was formed to be an ornament to society. Barras, the Thermidorien hero, himself an ex-noble, was fond of society, desirous of enjoying it on an agreeable scale, and of washing away the dregs which Jacobinism had mingled with all the dearest interests of life. He loved show, too, and pleasure, and might now indulge both without the risk of falling under the suspicion of incivism, which, in the reign of Terror, would have been incurred by any attempt to intermingle elegance with the enjoyments of social intercourse. At the apartments which he occupied, as one of the Directory, in the Luxemburg Palace, he gave its free course to his natural taste, and assembled an agreeable society of both sexes. Madame Tallien and her friend formed the soul of these assemblies, and



Digitized by Google

it was supposed that Barras was not insensible to the charms of Madame Beauharnois,—a rumour which was likely to arise, whether with or without foundation.

When Madame Beauharnois and General Buonaparte became intimate, the latter assures us, and we see no reason to doubt him, that although the lady was two or three years older than himself,* yet being still in the full bloom of beauty, and extremely agreeable in her manners, he was induced, solely by her personal charms, to make her an offer of his hand, heart, and fortunes,—little supposing, of course, to what a pitch the latter were to arise.

Although he himself is said to have been a fatalist, believing in destiny and in the influence of his star, he knew nothing, probably, of the prediction of a negro sorceress, who, while Marie Joseph was but a child, prophesied she should rise to a dignity greater than that of a queen, yet fall from it before her death †

---

* Buonaparte was then in his twenty-sixth year. Josephine gave herself in the marriage contract for twenty-eight.

† A lady of high rank, who happened to live for some time in the same convent at Paris, where Josephine was also a pensioner or boarder, heard her mention the prophecy, and told it herself to the author, just about the time of the Italian expedition, when Buonaparte was beginning to attract notice. Another clause is usually added to the prediction—that the party whom it concerned should die in an hospital, which was afterwards explained as referring to Malmaison. This the author did not hear from the same authority. The lady mentioned used to speak in the highest terms of the simple manners and great kindness of Madame Beauharnois.

Digitized by Google

This was one of those vague auguries, delivered at random by fools or impostors, which the caprice of Fortune sometimes matches with a corresponding and conforming event. But without trusting to the African sibyl's prediction, Buonaparte may have formed his match under the auspices of ambition as well as love. The marrying Madame Beauharnois was a mean of uniting his fortune with those of Barras and Tallien, the first of whom governed France as one of the Directors; and the last, from talents and political connexions, had scarcely inferior influence. He had already deserved well of them for his conduct on the Day of the Sections, but he required their countenance to rise still higher; and without derogating from the bride's merits, we may suppose her influence in their society corresponded with the views of her lover. It is, however, certain, that he always regarded her with peculiar affection; that he relied on her fate, which he considered as linked with and strengthening his own; and reposed, besides, considerable confidence in Josephine's tact and address in political business. She had at all times the art of mitigating his temper, and turning aside the hasty determinations of his angry moments, not by directly opposing, but by gradually parrying and disarming them. It must be added to her great praise, that she was always a willing, and often a successful advocate, in the cause of humanity.

Digitized by Google

They were married 9th March 1796; and the dowery of the bride was the chief command of the Italian armies, a scene which opened a full career to the ambition of the youthful General. Buonaparte remained with his wife only three days after his marriage, hastened to see his family, who were still at Marseilles, and, having enjoyed the pleasure of exhibiting himself as a favourite of Fortune in the city which he had lately left in the capacity of an indigent adventurer, proceeded rapidly to commence the career to which Fate called him, by placing himself at the head of the Italian army.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER III.

*The Alps.—Feelings and Views of Buonaparte on being appointed to the Command of the Army of Italy—General Account of his new Principles of Warfare—Mountainous Countries peculiarly favourable to them.—Retrospect of Military Proceedings since October 1795.—Hostility of the French Government to the Pope.—Massacre of the French Envoy Basseville, at Rome.—Austrian Army under Beaulieu.—Napoleon's Plan for entering Italy—Battle of Monte Notte, and Buonaparte's first Victory—Again defeats the Austrians at Millesimo—and again under Colli—Takes possession of Cherasco—King of Sardinia requests an Armistice, which leads to a Peace, concluded on very severe Terms.—Close of the Piedmontese Campaign.—Napoleon's Character at this period.*

NAPOLEON has himself observed, that no country in the world is more distinctly marked out by its natural boundaries than Italy. The Alps seem a barrier erected by Nature herself, on which she has inscribed in gigantic characters, "Here let Ambition be staid." Yet this tremendous circumvallation of mountains, as it could not prevent the ancient Romans from breaking out to desolate the world, so

Digitized by Google

it has been in like manner found, ever since the days of Hannibal, unequal to protect Italy herself from invasion. The French nation, in the times of which we treat, spoke indeed of the Alps as a natural boundary, so far as to authorize them to claim all which lay on the western side of these mountains, as naturally pertaining to their dominions; but they never deigned to respect them as such, when the question respected their invading on their own part the territories of other states, which lay on or beyond the formidable frontier. They assumed the law of natural limits as an unchallengeable rule when it made in favour of France, but never allowed it to be quoted against her interest.

During the Revolutionary War, the general fortune of battle had varied from time to time in the neighbourhood of these mighty boundaries. The King of Sardinia possessed almost all the fortresses which command the passes on these mountains, and had therefore been said to wear the keys of the Alps at his girdle. He had indeed lost his Dukedom of Savoy, and the County of Nice, in the last campaign; but he still maintained in opposition to the French a very considerable army, and was supported by his powerful ally the Emperor of Austria, always vigilant regarding that rich and beautiful portion of his dominions which lies in the north of Italy. The frontiers of Piedmont were therefore

Digitized by Google

covered by a strong Austro-Sardinian army, opposed to the French armies to which Napoleon had been just named Commander-in-chief. A strong Neapolitan force was also to be added, so that in general numbers their opponents were much superior to the French; but a great part of this force was cooped up in garrisons which could not be abandoned.

It may be imagined with what delight the General, scarce aged twenty-six, advanced to an independent field of glory and conquest, confident in his own powers, and in the perfect knowledge of the country which he had acquired, when, by his scientific plans of the campaign, he had enabled General Dumorbion to drive the Austrians back, and obtain possession of the Col di Tende, Saorgio, and the gorges of the higher Alps. Buonaparte's achievements had hitherto been under the auspices of others. He made the dispositions before Toulon, but it was Dugommier who had the credit of taking the place. Dumorbion, as we have just said, obtained the merit of the advantages in Piedmont. Even in the civil turmoil of 13th Vendemaire, his actual services had been overshaded by the official dignity of Barras, as Commander-in-chief. But if he reaped honour in Italy, the success would be exclusively his own; and that proud heart must have throbbed to meet danger upon such terms; that keen spirit have toiled to discover the means of success.

Digitized by Google

For victory, he relied chiefly upon a system of tactics hitherto unpractised in war, or at least upon any considerable or uniform scale. It may not be unnecessary to pause, to take a general view of the principles which he now called into action.

Nations in the savage state, being constantly engaged in war, always form for themselves some peculiar mode of fighting, suited to the country they inhabit, and to the mode in which they are armed. The North-American Indian becomes formidable as a rifleman or sharpshooter, lays ambuscades in his pathless forests, and practises all the arts of irregular war. The Arab, or Scythian, manœuvres his clouds of cavalry, so as to envelope and destroy his enemy in his deserts by sudden onsets, rapid retreats, and unexpected rallies; desolating the country around, cutting off his antagonist's supplies, and practising, in short, the species of war proper to a people superior in light cavalry.

The first stage of civilization is less favourable to success in war. As a nation advances in the peaceful arts, and the character of the soldier begins to be less familiarly united with that of the citizen, this system of natural tactics falls out of practice; and when foreign invasion, or civil broils, call the inhabitants to arms, they have no idea save that of finding out the enemy, rushing upon him, and committing the event to superior strength, bravery, or num-

Digitized by Google

bers. An example may be seen in the great Civil War of England, where men fought on both sides, in almost every county of the kingdom, without any combination, or exact idea of uniting in mutual support, or manœuvring so as to form their insulated bands into an army of preponderating force. At least, what was attempted for that purpose must have been on the rudest plan possible, where, even in actual fight, that part of an army which obtained any advantage, pursued it as far as they could, instead of using their success for the support of their companions; so that the main body was often defeated when a victorious wing was in pursuit of those whom their first onset had broken.

But as war becomes a profession, and a subject of deep study, it is gradually discovered, that the principles of tactics depend upon mathematical and arithmetical science; and that the commander will be victorious who can assemble the greatest number of forces upon the same point at the same moment, notwithstanding an inferiority of numbers to the enemy when the general force is computed on both sides. No man ever possessed in a greater degree than Buonaparte, the power of calculation and combination necessary for directing such decisive manœuvres. It constituted indeed his secret—as it was for some time called—and that secret consisted in an imagination fertile in expedients which would never have occurred to

Digitized by Google

others; clearness and precision in forming his plans; a mode of directing with certainty the separate moving columns which were to execute them, by arranging so that each division should arrive on the destined position at the exact time when their service was necessary; and above all, in the knowledge which enabled such a master-spirit to choose the most fitting subordinate implements, to attach them to his person, and, by explaining to them so much of his plan as it was necessary each should execute, to secure the exertion of their utmost ability in carrying it into effect.

Thus, not only were his manœuvres, however daring, executed with a precision which warlike operations had not attained before his time; but they were also performed with a celerity which gave them almost always the effect of surprise. Napoleon was like lightning in the eyes of his enemies; and when repeated experience had taught them to expect this portentous rapidity of movement, it sometimes induced his opponents to wait, in a dubious and hesitating posture, for attacks, which, with less apprehension of their antagonist, they would have thought it more prudent to frustrate and to anticipate.

Great sacrifices were necessary to enable the French troops to move with that degree of celerity which Buonaparte's combinations required. He made no allowance for impediments or unexpected obstacles;

Digitized by Google

the time which he had calculated for execution of manœuvres prescribed, was on no account to be exceeded—every sacrifice was to be made of baggage, stragglers, even artillery, rather than the column should arrive too late at the point of its destination. Hence, all that had hitherto been considered as essential not only to the health, but to the very existence of an army, was in a great measure dispensed with in the French service; and, for the first time, troops were seen to take the field without tents, without camp-equipage, without magazines of provisions, without military hospitals;—the soldiers eating as they could, sleeping where they could, dying where they could; but still advancing, still combating, and still victorious.

It is true, that the abandonment of every object, save success in the field, augmented frightfully all the usual horrors of war. The soldier, with arms in his hands, and wanting bread, became a marauder in self-defence; and in supplying his wants by rapine, did mischief to the inhabitants in a degree infinitely beyond the benefit he himself received; for it may be said of military requisition, as truly as of despotism, that it resembles the proceedings of a savage, who cuts down a tree to come at the fruit. Still, though purchased at a high rate, that advantage was gained by this rapid system of tactics, which in a slower progress, during which the soldier was regularly maintained, and kept under the restraint of

Digitized by Google

discipline, might have been rendered doubtful. It wasted the army through disease, fatigue, and all the consequences of want and toil; but still the victory was attained, and that was enough to make the survivors forget their hardships, and to draw forth new recruits to replace the fallen. Patient of labours, light of heart and temper, and elated by success beyond all painful recollections, the French soldiers were the very men calculated to execute this desperate species of service under a chief, who, their sagacity soon discovered, was sure to lead to victory all those, who could sustain the hardships by which it was to be won.

The character of the mountainous countries, among which he was for the first time to exercise his system, was highly favourable to Buonaparte's views. Presenting many lines and defensible positions, it induced the Austrian generals to become stationary, and occupy a considerable extent of ground, according to their old system of tactics. But though abounding in such positions as might at first sight seem absolutely impregnable, and were too often trusted to as such, the mountains also exhibited to the sagacious eye of a great Captain, gorges, defiles, and difficult and unsuspected points of access, by which he could turn the positions that appeared in front so formidable; and, by threatening them on the flank and on the rear, compel the enemy to a battle at disadvantage, or to a retreat with loss.

Digitized by Google

The forces which Buonaparte had under his command, were between fifty and sixty thousand good troops, having, many of them, been brought from the Spanish campaign, in consequence of the peace with that country; but very indifferently provided with clothing, and suffering from the hardships they had endured in those mountainous, barren, and cold regions. The cavalry, in particular, were in very poor order; but the nature of their new field of action not admitting of their being much employed, rendered this of less consequence. The misery of the French army, until these Alpine campaigns were victoriously closed by the armistice of Cherasco, could, according to Buonaparte's authority,* scarce bear description. The officers for several years had received no more than eight livres a month (twenty-pence sterling a-week) in name of pay, and staff-officers had not amongst them a single horse. Berthier preserved, as a curiosity, an order, dated on the day of the victory of Albenga, which munificently conferred a gratuity of three Louis d'ors upon every general of division.† Among the generals to whom

* Memoires écrités à St Helene, sous la dictée de l'Empereur, vol. iii. p. 151.

† This piece of generosity reminds us of the liberality of the kings of Brentford to their Knightsbridge forces—

*First King.* Here, take five guineas to these warlike men.

*Second King.* And here, five more, which makes the sum just ten.

*Herald.* We have not seen so much the lord knows when!

Digitized by Google

this donation was rendered acceptable by their wants, were, or might have been, many whose names became afterwards the praise and dread of war. Augereau, Massena, Serrurier, Joubert, Lasnes, and Murat, all generals of the first consideration, served under Buonaparte in the Italian campaign.

The position of the French army had repeatedly varied since October 1795, after the skirmish at Cairo. At that time the extreme left of the line, which extended from south to north, rested upon the Col d'Argentine, and communicated with the higher Alps—the centre was on the Col di Tende and Mont Bertrand—the left occupied the heights of Saint Bertrand, Saint Jacques, and other ridges running in the same direction, which terminated on the Mediterranean shore, near Finale.

The Austrians, strongly reinforced, attacked this line, and carried the heights of Mont Saint Jacques; and Kellermann, after a vain attempt to regain that point of his position, retreated to the line of defence more westward, which rests on Borghetto. Kellermann, an active and good brigade officer, but without sufficient talent to act as Commander-in-chief, was superseded, and Scherer was placed in command of the Army of Italy. He risked a battle with the Austrians near Soano, in which the talents of Massena and Augereau were conspicuous; and by the victory which ensued, the French regained the line of Saint



Digitized by Google

Jacques and Finale, which Kellermann had been forced to abandon; so that, in a general point of view, the relative position of the two opposed armies was not very different from that in which they had been left by Buonaparte.

But though Scherer had been thus far victorious, he was not the person to whom the Directory desired to intrust the daring plan of assuming the offensive on a grand scale upon the Alpine frontier, and, by carrying their arms into Italy, compelling the Austrians to defend themselves in that quarter, and to diminish the gigantic efforts which that power had hitherto continued with varied success, but unabated vigour, upon the Rhine. The rulers of France had a farther object in this bold scheme. They desired to intimidate, or annihilate and dethrone the Pope. He was odious to them as Head of the Church, because the attachment of the French clergy to the Roman See, and the points of conscience which rested upon that dependence, had occasioned the recusancy of the priests, especially of those who were most esteemed by the people, to take the constitutional oath. To the Pope, and his claims of supremacy, were therefore laid the charge of the great civil war in La Vendée, and the general disaffection of the Catholics in the south of France.

But this was not the only cause of the animosity entertained by the Directory against the Head of the Catholic Church. They had, three years before, sus-

Digitized by Google

tained an actual injury from the See of Rome, which was yet unavenged. The people of Rome were extremely provoked that the French residing there, and particularly the young artists, had displayed the three-coloured cockade, and were proposing to exhibit the scutcheon containing the emblems of the Republic over the door of the French consul. The Pope, through his minister, had intimated his desire that this should not be attempted, as he had not acknowledged the Republic as a legitimate government. The French, however, pursued their purpose; and the consequence was, that a popular commotion arose, which the Papal troops did not greatly exert themselves to suppress. The carriage of the French Envoy, or Chargé des Affaires, named Basseville, was attacked in the streets, and chased home; his house was broken into by the mob, and he himself, unarmed and unresisting, was cruelly assassinated. The French government considered this very naturally as a gross insult, and were the more desirous of avenging it, that by doing so they would approach nearer to the dignified conduct of the Roman Republic, which, in good or evil, seems always to have been their model. The affair happened in 1793, but was not forgotten in 1796.

The original idea entertained by the French government for prosecuting their resentment, had been by a proposed landing at Civita Vecchia with an army of ten thousand men, marching to Rome, and exact-



Digitized by Google

ing from the Pontiff complete atonement for the murder of Basseville. But as the English fleet rode unopposed in the Mediterranean, it became a matter of very doubtful success to transport such a body of troops to Civita Vecchia by sea, not to mention the chance that, even if safely landed, they would have found themselves in the centre of Italy, cut off from supplies and succours, assaulted on all hands, and most probably blockaded by the British fleet. Buonaparte, who was consulted, recommended that the north of Italy should be first conquered, in order that Rome might be with safety approached and chastised; and this scheme, though in appearance scarce a less bold measure, was a much safer one than the Directory had at first inclined to, since Buonaparte would only approach Rome in the event of his being able to preserve his communications with Lombardy and Tuscany, which he must conquer in the first place.

The plan of crossing the Alps and marching into Italy, suited in every respect the ambitious and self-confident character of the General to whom it was now intrusted. It gave him a separate and independent authority, and the power of acting on his own judgment and responsibility; for his countryman Salicetti, the deputy who accompanied him as commissioner of the government, was not probably much disposed to intrude his opinions. He had been Buo-



Digitized by Google

naparte's patron, and was still his friend. The young General's mind was made up to the alternative of conquest or ruin, as may be judged from his words to a friend at taking leave of him. "In three months," he said, "I will be either at Milan or at Paris;" intimating at once his desperate resolution to succeed, and his sense that the disappointment of all his prospects must be the consequence of a failure.

With the same view of animating his followers to ambitious hopes, he addressed the Army of Italy to the following purpose:—"Soldiers, you are hungry and naked—The Republic owes you much, but she has not the means to acquit herself of her debts. The patience with which you support your hardships among these barren rocks is admirable, but it cannot procure you glory. I am come to lead you into the most fertile plains that the sun beholds—Rich provinces, opulent towns, all shall be at your disposal—Soldiers, with such a prospect before you, can you fail in courage and constancy?" This was showing the deer to the hound when the leash is about to be slipped.

The Austro-Sardinian army, to which Buonaparte was opposed, was commanded by Beaulieu, an Austrian general of great experience and some talent, but no less than seventy-five years old; accustomed all his life to the ancient rules of tactics, and unlikely to suspect, anticipate, or frustrate, those plans, formed by a genius so fertile as that of Napoleon.

Digitized by Google

Buonaparte's plan for entering Italy differed from that of former conquerors and invaders, who had approached that fine country by penetrating or surmounting at some point or other her Alpine barriers. This inventive warrior resolved to attain the same object, by turning round the southern extremity of the Alpine range, keeping as close as possible to the shores of the Mediterranean, and passing through the Genoese territory by the narrow pass called the Boccheta, leading around the extremity of the mountains, and betwixt these and the sea. Thus he proposed to penetrate into Italy by the lowest level which the surface of the country presented, which must be of course where the range of the Alps unites with that of the Appenines. The point of junction where these two immense ranges of mountains touch upon each other, is at the heights of Mount Saint Jacques, above Genoa, where the Alps, running north-westward, ascend to Mont Blanc, their highest peak, and the Appenines, running to the south-east, gradually elevate themselves to Monte Velino, the tallest mountain of the range.

To attain his object of turning the Alps in the manner proposed, it was necessary that Buonaparte should totally change the situation of his army; those occupying a defensive line, running north and south, being to assume an offensive position, extending east and west. Speaking of an army as of a battalion, he

Digitized by Google

was to form into column upon the right of the line which he had hitherto occupied. This was an extremely delicate operation, to be undertaken in presence of an active enemy, his superior in numbers; nor was he permitted to execute it uninterrupted.

No sooner did Beaulieu learn that the French general was concentrating his forces, and about to change his position, than he hastened to preserve Genoa, without possession of which, or at least of the adjacent territory, Buonaparte's scheme of advance could scarce have been accomplished. The Austrian divided his army into three bodies. Colli, at the head of a Sardinian division, he stationed on the extreme right at Ceva; his centre division, under D'Argenteau, having its head at Sasiello, had directions to march on a mountain called Monte Notte, with two villages of the same name, near to which was a strong position at a place called Montelegino, which the French had occupied in order to cover their flank during their march towards the east. At the head of his left wing, Beaulieu himself moved from Novi upon Voltri, a small town within ten miles of Genoa, for the protection of that ancient city, whose independence and neutrality were like to be held in little reverence. Thus it appears, that while the French were endeavouring to penetrate into Italy by an advance from Sardinia by the way of Genoa, their line of march was threatened

Digitized by Google

by three armies of Austro-Sardinians, descending from the skirts of the Alps, and menacing to attack their flank. But, though a skilful disposition, Beaulieu's had, from the very mountainous character of the country, the great disadvantage of wanting connexion between the three separate divisions; neither, if needful, could they be easily united on any point desired, while the lower line, on which the French moved, permitted constant communication and co-operation.

On the 10th of April 1796, D'Argenteau, with the central division of the Austro-Sardinian army, descended upon Monte Notte, while Beaulieu on the left attacked the van of the French army, which had come as far as Voltri. General Cervoni, commanding the French division which sustained the attack of Beaulieu, was compelled to fall back on the main body of his countrymen; and had the assault of D'Argenteau been equally animated, or equally successful, the fame of Buonaparte might have been stifled in the birth. But Colonel Rampon, a French officer, who commanded the redoubts near Montelegino, stopped the progress of D'Argenteau by the most determined resistance. At the head of not more than fifteen hundred men, whom he inspired with his own courage, and caused to swear either to maintain their post or die there, he continued to defend the redoubts, during the whole of the 11th, until

Digitized by Google

D'Argenteau, whose conduct was afterwards greatly blamed for not making more determined efforts to carry them, drew off his forces for the evening, intending to renew the attack next morning.

But on the morning of the 12th, the Austrian general found himself surrounded with enemies. Cervoni, who retreated before Beaulieu, had united himself with La Harpe, and both advancing northward during the night of the 11th, established themselves in the rear of the redoubts of Montelegino, which Rampon had so gallantly defended. This was not all. The divisions of Augereau and Massena had marched, by different routes, on the flank and on the rear of D'Argenteau's column; so that next morning, instead of renewing his attack on the redoubts, the Austrian general was obliged to extricate himself by a disastrous retreat, leaving behind him colours and cannon, a thousand slain, and two thousand prisoners.

Such was the battle of Monte Notte, the first of Buonaparte's victories; eminently displaying that truth and mathematical certainty of combination, which enabled him on many more memorable occasions, even when his forces were inferior in numbers, and apparently disunited in position, suddenly to concentrate them and defeat his enemy, by overpowering him on the very point where he thought himself strongest. He had accumulated a superior force on the Austrian centre, and destroyed it, while

Digitized by Google

Colli, on the right, and Beaulieu himself, on the left, each at the head of numerous forces, did not even hear of the action till it was fought and won.

In consequence of the success at Monte Notte, and the close pursuit of the defeated Austrians, the French obtained possession of Cairo, which placed them on that side of the Alps which slopes towards Lombardy, and where the streams from these mountains run to join the Po.

Beaulieu had advanced to Voltri, while the French withdrew to unite themselves in the attack upon D'Argenteau. He had now to retreat northward with all haste to Dego, in the valley of the river Bormida, in order to resume communication with the right wing of his army, consisting chiefly of Sardinians, from which he was now nearly separated by the defeat of the centre. General Colli, by a corresponding movement on the right, occupied Millesimo, a small town about nine miles from Dego, with which he resumed and maintained communication by a brigade stationed on the heights of Biastro. From the strength of this position, though his forces were scarce sufficiently concentrated, Beaulieu hoped to maintain his ground till he should receive supplies from Lombardy, and recover the consequences of the defeat at Monte Notte. But the antagonist whom he had in front had no purpose of permitting him such respite.

Digitized by Google

Determined upon a general attack on all points of the Austrian position, the French army advanced in three bodies upon a space of four leagues in extent. Augereau, at the head of the division which had not fought at Monte Notte, advanced on the left against Millesimo; the centre, under Massena, directed themselves upon Dego, by the vale of the Bormida; the right wing, commanded by La Harpe, manœuvred on the right of all, for the purpose of turning Beaulieu's left flank. Augereau was the first who came in contact with the enemy. He attacked General Colli on the 13th April. His troops, emulous of the honour acquired by their companions, behaved with great bravery, rushed upon the outposts of the Sardinian army at Millesimo, forced, and retained possession of the gorge by which it was defended, and thus separated from the Sardinian army a body of about two thousand men, under the Austrian General Provera, who occupied a detached eminence called Cossaria, which covered the extreme left of General Colli's position. But the Austrian showed the most obstinate courage. Although surrounded by the enemy, he threw himself into the ruinous castle of Cossaria, which crowned the eminence, and showed a disposition to maintain the place to the last; the rather that, as he could see from the turrets of his stronghold the Sardinian troops, from whom he had been separated, preparing



Digitized by Google

to fight on the ensuing day, he might reasonably hope to be disengaged.

Buonaparte in person came up; and seeing the necessity of dislodging the enemy from this strong post, ordered three successive attacks to be made on the castle. Joubert, at the head of one of the attacking columns, had actually, with six or seven others, made his way into the outworks, when he was struck down by a wound in the head. General Banal and Adjutant-general Quenin fell, each at the head of the column which he commanded; and Buonaparte was compelled to leave the obstinate Provera in possession of the castle for the night. The morning of the 14th brought a different scene. Contenting himself with blockading the castle of Cossaria, Buonaparte now gave battle to General Colli, who made every effort to relieve it. These attempts were all in vain. He was defeated and cut off from Beaulieu; he retired as well as he could upon Ceva, leaving to his fate the brave General Provera, who was compelled to surrender at discretion.

On the same day, Massena, with the centre, attacked the heights of Biastro, being the point of communication betwixt Beaulieu and Colli, while La Harpe, having crossed the Bormida, where the stream came up to the soldiers' middle, attacked in front and in flank the village of Dego, where the Austrian

Digitized by Google

commander-in-chief was stationed. The first attack was completely successful,—the heights of Biastro were carried, and the Piedmontese routed. The assault of Dego was not less so, although after a harder struggle. Beaulieu was compelled to retreat, and was entirely separated from the Sardinians, who had hitherto acted in combination with him. The defenders of Italy now retreated in different directions, Colli moving westward towards Ceva, while Beaulieu, closely pursued through a difficult country, retired upon D'Aqui.

Even the morning after the victory, it was nearly wrested out of the hands of the conquerors. A fresh division of Austrians, who had evacuated Voltri later than the others, and were approaching to form a junction with their general, found the enemy in possession of Beaulieu's position. They arrived at Dego like men who had been led astray, and were no doubt surprised at finding it in the hands of the French. Yet they did not hesitate to assume the offensive, and by a brisk attack drove out the enemy, and replaced the Austrian eagles in the village. Great alarm was occasioned by this sudden apparition; for no one among the French could conceive the meaning of an alarm beginning on the opposite quarter to that on which the enemy had retreated, and without its being announced from the out-posts towards D'Aqui.

Buonaparte hastily marched on the village. The

Digitized by Google

Austrians repelled two attacks; at the third, General Lanusse, afterwards killed in Egypt, put his hat upon the point of his sword, and advancing to the charge, penetrated into the place. Lannes also, afterwards Duke of Montebello, distinguished himself on the same occasion by courage and military skill, and was recommended by Buonaparte to the Directory for promotion. In this battle of Dego, more commonly called of Millesimo, the Austro-Sardinian army lost five or six thousand men, thirty pieces of cannon, with a great quantity of baggage. Besides, the Austrians were divided from the Sardinians; and the two generals began to show, not only that their forces were disunited, but that they themselves were acting upon separate motives; the Sardinians desiring to protect Turin, whereas the movements of Beaulieu seemed still directed to prevent the French from entering the Milanese territory.

Leaving a sufficient force on the Bormida to keep in check Beaulieu, Buonaparte now turned his strength against Colli, who, overpowered, and without hopes of succour, abandoned his line of defence near Ceva, and retreated to the line of the Tanaro.

Napoleon in the meantime fixed his head-quarters at Ceva, and enjoyed from the heights of Montezemoto, the splendid view of the fertile fields of Piedmont stretching in boundless perspective be-

Digitized by Google

neath his feet, watered by the Po, the Tanaro, and a thousand other streams which descend from the Alps. Before the eyes of the delighted army of victors lay this rich expanse like a promised land; behind them was the wilderness they had passed;—not indeed a desert of barren sand, similar to that in which the Israelites wandered, but a huge tract of rocks and inaccessible mountains, crested with ice and snow, seeming by nature designed as the barrier and rampart of the blessed regions, which stretched eastward beneath them. We can sympathize with the self-congratulation of the General who had surmounted such tremendous obstacles in a way so unusual. He said to the officers around him, as they gazed upon this magnificent scene, "Hannibal took the Alps by storm. We have succeeded as well by turning their flank."

The dispirited army of Colli was attacked at Mondovi during his retreat, by two corps of Buonaparte's army, from two different points, commanded by Massena and Serrurier. The last general, the Sardinian repulsed with loss; but when he found Massena, in the meantime, was turning the left of his line, and that he was thus pressed on both flanks, his situation became almost desperate. The cavalry of the Piedmontese made an effort to renew the combat. For a time they overpowered and drove back those of the French; and General Stengel, who command-

Digitized by Google

ed the latter, was slain in attempting to get them into order. But the desperate valour of Murat, unrivalled perhaps in the heady charge of cavalry combat, renewed the fortune of the field; and the horse, as well as the infantry of Colli's army, were compelled to a disastrous retreat. The defeat was decisive; and the Sardinians, after the loss of the best of their troops, their cannon, baggage, and appointments, and being now totally divided from their Austrian allies, and liable to be overpowered by the united forces of the French army, had no longer hopes of effectually covering Turin. Buonaparte, pursuing his victory, took possession of Cherasco, within ten leagues of the Piedmontese capital.

Thus Fortune, in the course of a campaign of scarce a month, placed her favourite in full possession of the desired road to Italy, by command of the mountain-passes, which had been invaded and conquered with so much military skill. He had gained three battles over forces far superior to his own; inflicted on the enemy a loss of twenty-five thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; taken eighty pieces of cannon, and twenty-one stand of colours; reduced to inaction the Austrian army; almost annihilated that of Sardinia; and stood in full communication with France upon the eastern side of the Alps, with Italy lying open before him, as if to invite his invasion. But it was not even with such

Digitized by Google

laurels, and with facilities which now presented themselves for the accomplishment of new and more important victories upon a larger scale, and with more magnificent results, that the career of Buonaparte's earliest campaign was to be closed. The head of the royal House of Savoy, if not one of the most powerful, still one of the most distinguished in Europe, was to have the melancholy experience, that he had encountered with the Man of Destiny, as he was afterwards proudly called, who, for a time, had power, in the emphatic phrase of Scripture, "to bind kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron."

The shattered relics of the Sardinian army had fallen back, or rather fled, to within two leagues of Turin, without hope of being again able to make an effectual stand. The Sovereign of Sardinia, Savoy, and Piedmont, had no means of preserving his capital, nay, his existence on the continent, excepting by an almost total submission to the will of the victor. Let it be remembered, that Victor Amadeus the Third was the descendant of a race of heroes, who, from the peculiar situation of their territories, as constituting a neutral ground of great strength betwixt France and the Italian possessions of Austria, had often been called on to play a part in the general affairs of Europe, of importance far superior to that which their condition as a second-rate power could otherwise have demanded. In general, they had

Digitized by Google

compensated their inferiority of force by an ability and gallantry which did them the highest credit, both as generals and as politicians; and now Piedmont was at the feet, in her turn, of an enemy weaker in numbers than her own. Besides the reflections on the past fame of his country, the present humiliating situation of the King was rendered more mortifying by the state of his family connexions. Victor Amadeus was the father-in-law of Monsieur (by right Louis XVIII.), and of the Comte d'Artois (the reigning King of France). He had received his sons-in-law at his court at Turin, had afforded them an opportunity of assembling around them their forces, consisting of the emigrant noblesse, and had strained all the power he possessed, and in many instances successfully, to withstand both the artifices and the arms of the French Republicans. And now, so born, so connected, and with such principles, he was condemned to sue for peace on any terms which might be dictated, from a General of France aged twenty-six years, who, a few months before, was desirous of an appointment in the artillery service of the Grand Seignor!

An armistice was requested by the King of Sardinia under these afflicting circumstances, but could only be purchased by placing two of his strongest fortresses,—those keys of the Alps, of which his ancestors had long been the keepers,—Coni and Torto-



Digitized by Google

na, in the hands of the French, and thus acknowledging that he surrendered at discretion. The armistice was agreed on at Cherasco, but commissioners were sent by the King to Paris, to arrange with the Directory the final terms of peace. These were such as victors give to the vanquished.

Besides the fortresses already surrendered, the King of Sardinia was to place in the hands of the French five others of the first importance. The road from France to Italy was to be at all times open to the French armies; and indeed the king, by surrender of the places mentioned, had lost the power of interrupting their progress. He was to break off every species of alliance and connexion with the combined powers at war with France, and become bound not to entertain at his court, or in his service, any French emigrants whatsoever, or any of their connexions; nor was an exception even made in favour of his own two daughters. In short, the surrender was absolute. Victor Amadeus exhibited the utmost reluctance to subscribe this treaty, and did not long survive it. His son succeeded in name to the kingdom of Piedmont; but the fortresses and passes, which had rendered him a prince of some importance, were, excepting Turin, and one or two of minor consequence, all surrendered into the hands of the French.



Digitized by Google

Viewing this treaty with Sardinia as the close of the Piedmontese campaign, we pause to consider the character which Buonaparte displayed at that period. The talents as a general which he had exhibited, were of the very first order. There was no disconnexion in his objects, they were all attained by the very means he proposed, and the success was improved to the utmost. A different conduct usually characterizes those who stumble unexpectedly on victory, either by good fortune or by the valour of their troops. When the favourable opportunity occurs to such leaders, they are nearly as much embarrassed by it as by a defeat. But Buonaparte, who had foreseen the result of each operation by his sagacity, stood also prepared to make the most of the advantages which might be derived from it.

His style in addressing the Convention was, at this period, more modest and simple, and therefore more impressive, than the figurative and bombastic style which he afterwards used in his bulletins. His self-opinion, perhaps, was not risen so high as to permit him to use the sesquipedalian words and violent metaphors, to which he afterwards seems to have given a preference. We may remark also, that the young victor was honourably anxious to secure for such officers as distinguished themselves, the preferment which their services entitled them to. He urges the promotion of his brethren in arms in al-



Digitized by Google

most every one of his dispatches,—a conduct not only just and generous, but also highly politic. Were his recommendations successful, their General had the gratitude due for the benefit; were they overlooked, thanks equally belonged to him for his good wishes, and the resentment for the slight attached itself to the government, who did not give effect to them.

If Buonaparte spoke simply and modestly on his own achievements, the bombast which he spared was liberally dealt out to the Convention by an orator named Daubermesnil, who invokes all bards, from Tyrtæus and Ossian down to the author of the Marseillois hymn—all painters, from Apelles to David —all musicians, from Orpheus to the author of the *Chant du depart*, to sing, paint, and compose music, upon the achievements of the General and Army of Italy.

With better taste, a medal of Buonaparte was struck in the character of the Conqueror of the battle of Monte Notte. The face is extremely thin, with lank hair, a striking contrast to the fleshy square countenance exhibited on his later coins. On the reverse, Victory, bearing a palm branch, a wreath of laurel, and a naked sword, is seen flying over the Alps. This medal we notice as the first of the splendid series which records the victories and honours of Napoleon, and which was designed by Denon as a tribute to the genius of his patron.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER IV.

*Further progress of the French Army under Buonaparte—He crosses the Po, at Placenza, on 7th May.—Battle of Lodi takes place on the 10th, in which the French are victorious.—Remarks on Napoleon's Tactics in this celebrated Action.—French take possession of Cremona and Pizzighitone.—Milan deserted by the Archduke Ferdinand and his Duchess.—Buonaparte enters Milan on the 14th May—General situation of the Italian States at this period.—Napoleon inflicts fines upon the neutral and unoffending States of Parma and Modena, and extorts the surrender of some of their finest Pictures.—Remarks upon this novel procedure.*

THE ardent disposition of Buonaparte did not long permit him to rest after the advantages which he had secured. He had gazed on Italy with an eagle's eye; but it was only for a moment, ere stooping on her with the wing, and pouncing on her with the talons, of the king of birds.

A general with less extraordinary talent would perhaps have thought it sufficient to have obtained possession of Piedmont, revolutionizing its government as the French had done that of Holland, and would

Digitized by Google

have awaited fresh supplies and reinforcements from France before advancing to farther and more distant conquests, and leaving the Alps under the dominion of a hostile, though for the present a subdued and disarmed monarchy. But Buonaparte had studied the campaign of Villars in these regions, and was of opinion that it was by that general's hesitation to advance boldly into Italy, after the victories which the Marshal de Coigni had obtained at Parma and Guastalla, that the enemy had been enabled to assemble an accumulating force, before which the French were compelled to retreat. He determined, therefore, to give the Republic of Venice, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and other States in Italy, no time to muster forces, and take a decided part, as they were likely to do, to oppose a French invasion. Their terror and surprise could not fail to be increased by a sudden irruption; while months, weeks, even days of consideration, might afford those States, attached as the rulers must be to their ancient oligarchical forms of government, time and composure to assume arms to maintain them. A speedy resolution was the more necessary, as Austria, alarmed for her Italian possessions, was about to make every effort for their defence. Orders had already been sent by the Aulic Council of War to detach an army of thirty thousand men, under Wurmser, from the Army of the

Digitized by Google

Rhine to the frontiers of Italy. These were to be strengthened by other reinforcements from the interior, and by such forces as could be raised in the mountainous district of the Tyrol, which furnishes perhaps the most experienced and most formidable sharp-shooters in the world. The whole was to be united to the fragments of Beaulieu's defeated troops. If suffered to form a junction, and arrange their plans for attack or defence, an army, of force so superior to the French in numbers, veterans in discipline, and commanded by a general like Wurmser, was likely to prevent all the advantages which the French might gain by a sudden irruption, ere an opposition so formidable was collected and organized. But the daring scheme which Napoleon contemplated, corresponding to the genius of him who had formed it, required to be executed with caution, united with secrecy and celerity. These were the more necessary, as, although the thanks of the French government had been voted to the Army of Italy five times in the course of a month, yet the Directory, alarmed at the more doubtful state of hostilities upon the Rhine, had turned their exertions chiefly in that direction; and, trusting to the skill of their General, and the courage of his troops, had not transmitted recruits and supplies upon the scale necessary for the great undertakings which he meditated. But *Italiam—Ita-*

Digitized by Google

*liam !**—the idea of penetrating into a country so guarded and defended by nature, as well as by military skill, the consciousness of having surmounted obstacles of a nature so extraordinary, and the hope that they were approaching the reward of so many labours —above all, their full confidence in a leader, who seemed to have bound Victory to his standard— made the soldiers follow their general, without counting their own deficiencies, or the enemy's numbers.

To encourage this ardour, Buonaparte circulated an address, in which, complimenting the army on the victories they had gained, he desired them at the same time to consider nothing as won so long as the Austrians held Milan, and while the ashes of those who had conquered the Tarquins were soiled by the presence of the assassins of Basseville. It would appear that classical allusions are either familiar to the French soldiers, or that, without being more learned than others of their rank, they are pleased with being supposed to understand them. They probably considered the oratory of their great leader as soldier-like words, and words of exceeding good command. The English soldier, addressed in such flights of eloquence, would either have laughed at them, or sup-

* Italiam, Italiam ! primus conclamat Achates ; Italiam socii, magno clamore, salutant.

Digitized by Google

posed that he had got a crazed play-actor put over him, instead of a general. But there is this peculiar trait in the French character, that they are willing to take everything of a complimentary kind in the manner in which it seems to be meant. They appear to have made that bargain with themselves on many points, which the audience usually do in a theatre, —to accept of the appearance of things for the reality. They never inquire whether a triumphal arch is of stone or of wood; whether a scutcheon is of solid metal, or only gilt; or whether a speech, of which the tendency is flattering to their national vanity, contains genuine eloquence, or only tumid extravagance.

All thoughts were therefore turned to Italy. The fortress of Tortona was surrendered to the French by the King of Sardinia; Buonaparte's head-quarters were fixed there. Massena concentrated another part of the army at Alexandria, menacing Milan, and threatening, by the passage of the Po, to invade the territories belonging to Austria on the northern bank of that river. As Buonaparte himself observed, the passage of a great river is one of the most critical operations in modern war; and Beaulieu had collected his forces to cover Milan, and prevent the French, if possible, from crossing the Po. But, in order to avert the dangerous consequences of attempting

Digitized by Google

to force his passage on the river, defended by a formidable enemy in front, Buonaparte's subtle genius had already prepared the means for deceiving the old Austrian respecting his intended operations.

Valenza appeared to be the point of passage proposed by the French; it is one of those fortresses which cover the eastern frontier of Piedmont, and is situated upon the river Po. During the conferences previous to the armistice of the Cherasco, Buonaparte had thrown out hints as if he were particularly desirous to be possessed of this place, and it was actually stipulated in the terms of the treaty, that the French should occupy it for the purpose of effecting their passage over the river. Beaulieu did not fail to learn what had passed, which coinciding with his own ideas of the route by which Buonaparte meant to advance upon Milan, he hastened to concentrate his army on the opposite bank, at a place called Valeggio, about eighteen miles from Valenza, the point near which he expected the attempt to be made, and from which he could move easily in any direction towards the river, before the French could send over any considerable force. Massena also countenanced this report, and rivetted the attention of the Austrians on Valenza, by pushing strong reconnoitring parties from Alexandria in the direction of that fortress. Besides, Beaulieu had himself crossed the Po at this place, and, like all men of routine, (for

Digitized by Google

such he was, though a brave and approved soldier,) he was always apt to suppose that the same reasons which directed himself, must needs seem equally convincing to others. In almost all delicate affairs, persons of ordinary talents are misled by their incapacity to comprehend, that men of another disposition will be likely to view circumstances, and act upon principles, with an eye and opinion very different from their own.

But the reports which induced the Austrian general to take the position at Valeggio, arose out of a stratagem of war. It was never Buonaparte's intention to cross the Po at Valenza. The proposal was a feint to draw Beaulieu's attention to that point, while the French accomplished the desired passage at Placenza, nearly fifty miles lower down the river than Valeggio, where their subtle General had induced the Austrians to take up their line of defence. Marching for this purpose with incredible celerity, Buonaparte, on the 7th of May, assembled his forces at Placenza, when their presence was least expected, and where there were none to defend the opposite bank, except two or three squadrons of Austrians, stationed there merely for the purpose of reconnoitring. General Andreossi (for names distinguished during these dreadful wars begin to rise on the narrative, as the stars glimmer out on the hori-

Digitized by Google

zon) commanded an advanced guard of five hundred men. They had to pass in the common ferry-boats, and the crossing required nearly half an hour; so that the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of achieving the operation, had they been seriously opposed, appears to demonstration. Colonel Lannes threw himself ashore first with a body of grenadiers, and speedily dispersed the Austrian hussars, who attempted to resist their landing. The vanguard having thus opened the passage, the other divisions of the army were enabled to cross in succession, and in the course of two days the whole were in the Milanese territory, and on the left bank of the Po. The military manœuvres, by means of which Buonaparte achieved, without the loss of a man, an operation of so much consequence, and which, without such address as he displayed, must have been attended with great loss, and risk of failure, have often been considered as among his most masterly movements.

Beaulieu, informed too late of the real plans of the French general, moved his advanced guard, composed of the division of General Liptay, from Valeggio towards the Po, in the direction of Placenza. But here also the alert general of the French had been too rapid in his movements for the aged German. Buonaparte had no intention to wait an attack from the enemy with such a river as the Po in his

Digitized by Google

rear, which he had no means of recrossing if the day should go against him; so that a defeat, or even a material check, would have endangered the total loss of his army. He was, therefore, pushing forward in order to gain ground on which to manœuvre, and the advanced divisions of the two armies met at a village called Fombio, not far from Casal, on the 8th of May. The Austrians threw themselves into the place, fortified and manned the steeples, and whatever posts else could be made effectual for defence, and reckoned upon defending themselves there until the main body of Beaulieu's army should come up to support them. But they were unable to sustain the vivacity of the French onset, to which so many successive victories had now given a double impulse. The village was carried at the bayonet's point; the Austrians lost their cannon, and left behind one-third of their men, in slain, wounded, and prisoners. The wreck of Liptay's division saved themselves by crossing the Adda at Pizzighitone, while they protected their retreat by a hasty defence of that fortress.

Another body of Austrians having advanced from Casal, to support, it may be supposed, the division of Liptay, occasioned a great loss to the French army in the person of a very promising officer. This was General La Harpe, highly respected and trusted by Buonaparte, and repeatedly mentioned in the campaigns



Digitized by Google

of Piedmont. Hearing the alarm given by the outposts, when the Austrian patroles came in contact with them, La Harpe rode out to satisfy himself concerning the nature and strength of the attacking party. On his return to his own troops, they mistook him and his attendants for the enemy, fired upon, and killed him. He was a Swiss by birth, and had been compelled to leave his country on account of his democratical opinions; a grenadier, says Buonaparte, in stature and in courage, but of a restless disposition. The soldiers, with the superstition belonging to their profession, remarked, that during the battle of Fombio, on the day before, he was less animated than usual, as if an obscure sense of his approaching fate already overwhelmed him.

The Austrian regiment of cavalry which occasioned this loss, after some skirmishing, was content to escape to Lodi, a point upon which Beaulieu was again collecting his scattered forces, for the purpose of covering Milan, by protecting the line of the Adda.

"The passage of the Po," said Buonaparte, in his report to the Directory, "had been expected to prove the most bold and difficult manœuvre of the campaign, nor did we expect to have an action of more vivacity than that of Dego. But we have now to recount the battle of Lodi." As the conqueror deservedly congratulated himself on this hard-won

Digitized by Google

victory, and as it has become in a manner especially connected with his name and military character, we must, according to our plan, be somewhat minute in our details respecting it.

The Adda, a large and deep river, though fordable at some places and in some seasons, crosses the valley of the Milanese, rising and joining the Po at Pizzighitone; so that, if the few places at which it can be crossed are fortified or defended, it forms a line covering all the Milanese territory to the eastward, from any force approaching from the direction of Piedmont. This line Beaulieu proposed to make good against the victor before whom he had so often retreated, and he conjectured (on this occasion rightly) that, to prosecute his victory by marching upon Milan, Buonaparte would first desire to dislodge the covering army from the line of the Adda, as he could not safely advance to the capital of Lombardy, leaving the enemy in possession of such a defensive line upon their flank. He also conjectured that this attempt would be made at Lodi.

This is a large town, containing twelve thousand inhabitants. It has old Gothic walls, but its chief defence consists in the river Adda, which flows through it, and is crossed by a wooden bridge about five hundred feet in length. When Beaulieu, after the affair of Fombio, evacuated Casal, he retreated to this place with about ten thousand men. The rest

Digitized by Google

of his army was directed upon Milan and Cassano, a town situated, like Lodi, upon the Adda.

Buonaparte calculated that, if he could accomplish the passage of the Adda at Lodi, he might overtake and disperse the remainder of Beaulieu's army, without allowing the veteran time to concentrate them for farther resistance in Milan, or even for rallying under the walls of the strong fortress of Mantua. The judgment of the French General was in war not more remarkable for seizing the most advantageous moment of attack, than for availing himself to the very uttermost of victory when obtained. The quick-sighted faculty and power of instant decision with which nature had endowed him, had, it may be supposed, provided beforehand for the consequences of the victory ere it was yet won, and left no room for doubt or hesitation when his hopes had become certainties. We have already remarked, that there have been many commanders, who, after an accidental victory, are so much at a loss what is next to be done, that while they are hesitating, the golden moments pass away unimproved; but Buonaparte knew as well how to use, as how to obtain advantages.

Upon the 10th day of May, attended by his best generals, and heading the choicest of his troops, Napoleon pressed forward towards Lodi. About a league from Casal, he encountered the Austrian rear-

Digitized by Google

guard, who had been left, it would appear, at too great a distance from their main body. The French had no difficulty in driving these troops before them into the town of Lodi, which was but slightly defended by the few soldiers whom Beaulieu had left on the western or right side of the Adda. He had also neglected to destroy the bridge, although he ought rather to have supported a defence on the right bank of the river, (for which the town afforded many facilities,) till the purpose of destruction was completed, than have allowed it to exist. If his rear-guard had been actually stationed in Lodi, instead of being so far in the rear of the main body, they might, by a protracted resistance from the old walls and houses, have given time for this necessary act of demolition.

But though the bridge was left standing, it was swept by twenty or thirty Austrian pieces of artillery, whose thunders menaced death to any who should attempt that pass of peril. The French, with great alertness, got as many guns in position on the left bank, and answered this tremendous fire with equal spirit. During this cannonade, Buonaparte threw himself personally amongst the fire, in order to station two guns loaded with grape-shot in such a position, as rendered it impossible for any one to approach for the purpose of undermining or destroying the bridge; and then calmly proceeded to make arrangements for a desperate attempt.

Digitized by Google

His cavalry was directed to cross, if possible, at a place where the Adda was said to be fordable, —a task which they accomplished with difficulty. Meantime Napoleon observed that the Austrian line of infantry was thrown considerably behind the batteries of artillery which they supported, in order that they might have the advantage of a bending slope of ground, which afforded them shelter from the French fire. He, therefore, drew up a close column of three thousand grenadiers, protected from the artillery of the Austrians by the walls and houses of the town, and yet considerably nearer to the enemy's line of guns on the opposite side of the Adda than were their own infantry, which ought to have protected them. The column of grenadiers, thus secured, waited in comparative safety, until the appearance of the French cavalry, who had crossed the ford, began to disquiet the flank of the Austrians. This was the critical moment which Buonaparte expected. A single word of command wheeled the head of the column of grenadiers to the left, and placed it on the perilous bridge. The word was given to advance, and they rushed on with loud shouts of *Vive la Republique!* But their appearance upon the bridge was the signal for a redoubled shower of grape-shot, while, from the windows of the houses on the left side of the river, the soldiers who occupied them poured volley after volley of musketry on the thick



Digitized by Google

column, as it endeavoured to force its way over the long bridge. At one time the French grenadiers, unable to sustain this dreadful storm, appeared for an instant to hesitate. But Berthier, the chief of Buonaparte's staff, with Massena, L'Allemagne, and Corvini, hurried to the head of the column, and by their presence and gallantry renewed the resolution of the soldiers, who now poured across the bridge. The Austrians had but one resource left; to rush on the French with the bayonet, and kill, or drive back into the Adda, those who had forced their passage, before they could deploy into line, or receive support from their comrades, who were still filing along the bridge. But the opportunity was neglected, either because the troops, who should have executed the manœuvre, had been, as we have already noticed, withdrawn too far from the river; or because the soldiery, as happens when they repose too much confidence in a strong position, became panic-struck when they saw it unexpectedly carried. Or it may be, that General Beaulieu, so old and so unfortunate, had somewhat lost that energy and presence of mind which the critical moment demanded. Whatever was the cause, the French rushed on the artillerymen, from whose fire they had lately suffered so tremendously, and, unsupported as they were, had little difficulty in bayonetting them.



Digitized by Google

The Austrian army now completely gave way, and lost in their retreat, annoyed as it was by the French cavalry, upwards of twenty guns, a thousand prisoners, and perhaps two thousand more wounded and slain.

Such was the famous passage of the Bridge of Lodi; achieved with such skill and gallantry, as gave the victor the same character for fearless intrepidity, and practical talent in actual battle, which the former part of the campaign had gained him as a most able tactician.

Yet this action, though successful, has been severely criticised by those who desire to derogate from Buonaparte's military talents. It has been said, that he might have passed over a body of infantry at the same ford where the cavalry had crossed; and that thus, by manœuvring on both sides of the river, he might have compelled the Austrians to evacuate their position on the left bank of the Adda, without hazarding an attack upon their front, which could not but cost the assailants very dearly.

Buonaparte had perhaps this objection in his recollection when he states, that the column of grenadiers were so judiciously sheltered from the fire until the moment when their wheel to the left brought them on the bridge, that they only lost two hundred men during the storm of the passage. We cannot but suppose, that this is a very mitigated account of

Digitized by Google

the actual loss of the French army. So slight a loss is not to be easily reconciled with the horrors of the battle, as he himself detailed them in his dispatches; nor with the conclusion, in which he mentions, that of the sharp contests which the Army of Italy had to sustain during the campaign, none was to be compared with that "terrible passage of the Bridge of Lodi."

In fact, as we may take occasion to prove hereafter, the Memoranda of the great General, dictated to his officers at Saint Helena, have a little too much the character of his original bulletins; and, while they show a considerable disposition to exaggerate the difficulties to be overcome, the fury of the conflict, and the exertions of courage by which the victory was attained, show a natural inconsistency, from the obvious wish to diminish the loss which was its unavoidable price.

But admitting that the loss of the French had been greater on this occasion than their General cared to recollect or acknowledge, his military conduct seems not the less justifiable.

Buonaparte appears to have had two objects in view in this daring exploit. The first was, to improve and increase the terror into which his previous successes had thrown the Austrians, and to impress on them the conviction, that no position, however strong, was able to protect them against the audacity and ta-

Digitized by Google

lent of the French. This discouraging feeling, exemplified by so many defeats, and now by one in circumstances where the Austrians appeared to have every advantage, it was natural to suppose, would hurry Beaulieu's retreat, induce him to renounce all subsequent attempts to cover Milan, and rather to reunite the fragments of his army, particularly that part of Liptay's division, which, after being defeated at Fombio, had thrown themselves into Pizzighitone. To have manœuvred slowly and cautiously, would not have struck that terror and confusion which was inspired by the desperate attack on the position at Lodi. In this point the victor perfectly succeeded; for Beaulieu, after his misadventure, drew off without any farther attempt to protect the ancient capital of Lombardy, and threw himself upon Mantua, with the intention of covering that strong fortress, and at the same time of sheltering under it the remains of his army, until he could form a junction with the forces which Wurmser was bringing to his assistance from the Rhine.

Buonaparte himself has pointed out a second object, in which he was less successful. He had hoped the rapid surprise of the Bridge of Lodi might enable him to overtake or intercept the rest of Beaulieu's army, which, as we have said, had retreated by Cassano. He failed, indeed, in this object; for these forces also made their way into the Mantuan territory, and joined Beaulieu, who, by crossing the classical

Digitized by Google

Mincio, placed another strong line of military defence betwixt him and his victor. But the prospect of intercepting and destroying so large a force, was worth the risk he encountered at Lodi, especially taking into view the spirit which his army had acquired from a long train of victory, together with the discouragement which had crept into the Austrian ranks from a uniform series of defeats.

It should also be remembered, in considering the necessity of forcing the bridge of Lodi, that the ford over the Adda was crossed with difficulty even by the cavalry, and that when once separated by the river, the communication between the main army and the detachment of infantry, (which his censors say Napoleon should have sent across in the same manner,) being in a great degree interrupted, the latter might have been exposed to losses, from which Buonaparte, situated as he was on the right bank, could have had no means of protecting them.

Leaving the discussion of what might have been, to trace that which actually took place, the French cavalry pursued the retreating Austrians as far as Cremona, of which they took possession. Pizzighitone was obliged to capitulate, the garrison being cut off from all possibility of succour. About five hundred prisoners surrendered in that fortress; the rest of Liptay's division, and other Austrian corps, could no otherwise escape, than by throwing themselves into the Venetian territory.

Digitized by Google

It was at this time that Buonaparte had some conversation with an old Hungarian officer made prisoner in one of the actions, whom he met with at a bivouac by chance, and who did not know him. The veteran's language was a curious commentary on the whole campaign; nay, upon Buonaparte's general system of warfare, which appeared so extraordinary to those who had long practised the art on more formal principles. "Things are going on as ill and as irregularly as possible," said the old martinet. "The French have got a young general, who knows nothing of the regular rules of war; he is sometimes on our front, sometimes on the flank, sometimes on the rear. There is no supporting such a gross violation of rules." This somewhat resembles the charge which foreign tacticians have brought against the English, that they gained victories by continuing, with their insular ignorance and obstinacy, to fight on, long after the period when, if they had known the rules of war, they ought to have considered themselves as completely defeated.

A peculiar circumstance is worth mentioning. The French soldiers had a mode at that time of amusing themselves, by conferring an imaginary rank upon their generals, when they had done some remarkable exploit. They showed their sense of the bravery displayed by Buonaparte at the Battle of Lodi, by creating him a corporal; and by this phrase, of the

Digitized by Google

Little Corporal, he was distinguished in the intrigues formed against him, as well as those which were carried on in his favour; in the language of George Cadoudal, who laid a scheme for assassinating him, and in the secret consultation of the old soldiers and others, who arranged his return from Elba.

We are now to turn for a time from war to its consequences, which possess an interest of a nature different from the military events we have been detailing. The movements which had taken place since the King of Sardinia's defeat, had struck terror into the government of Milan, and the Archduke Ferdinand, by whom Austrian Lombardy was governed. But while Beaulieu did his best to cover the capital by force of arms, the measures resorted to by the government were rather of a devotional than warlike character. Processions were made, relics exposed, and rites resorted to, which the Catholic religion prescribes as an appeal to Heaven in great national calamities. But the saints they invoked were deaf or impotent; for the passage of the bridge of Lodi, and Beaulieu's subsequent retreat to Mantua, left no possibility of defending Milan. The Archduke and his Duchess immediately left Milan, followed by a small retinue, and leaving only a moderate force in the citadel, which was not in a very defensible condition. Their carriages passed through a large crowd which filled the streets. As they moved slowly



Digitized by Google

along, the royal pair were observed to shed natural tears, at leaving the capital of these princely possessions of their house. The people observed a profound silence, only broken by low whispers. They showed neither joy nor sorrow at the event which was passing—all thoughts were bent in anxious anticipation upon what was to happen next.

When the Archduke had departed, the restraint which his presence had imposed from habit and sentiment, as much as from fear of his authority, was of course removed, and many of the Milanese citizens began, with real or affected zeal for republicanism, to prepare themselves for the reception of the French. The three-coloured cockade was at first timidly assumed; but the example being shown, it seemed as if these emblems had fallen like snow into the caps and hats of the multitude. The imperial arms were removed from the public buildings, and a placard was put on the palace of the government with an inscription—"This house is to be let—apply for the keys to the French Commissioner Salicetti." The nobles hastened to lay aside their armorial bearings, their servants' liveries, and other badges of aristocracy. Meantime the magistrates caused order to be maintained in the town, by regular patroles of the burgher guard. A deputation of the principal inhabitants of Milan was sent to the victorious General with offers of full submission, since

Digitized by Google

there was no longer room for resistance, or for standing upon terms.

On the 14th of May, Buonaparte made his public entry into Milan, under a triumphal arch prepared for the occasion, which he traversed, surrounded by his guards, and took up his residence in the archepiscopal palace. The same evening a splendid entertainment was given, and the Tree of Liberty, (of which the aristocrats observed, that it was a bare pole without either leaves or fruit, roots or branches,) was erected with great form in the principal square. All this affectation of popular joy did not disarm the purpose of the French general, to make Milan contribute to the relief of his army. He imposed upon the place a requisition of twenty millions of livres, but offered to accept of goods of any sort in kind, and at a rateable valuation; for it may be easily supposed that specie, the representative of value, must be scarce in a city circumstanced as Milan was. The public funds of every description, even those dedicated to the support of hospitals, went into the French military chest; the church-plate was seized as part of the requisition; and, when all this was done, the citizens were burthened with the charge of finding rations for fifteen thousand men daily, by which force the citadel, with its Austrian garrison, was instantly to be blockaded.

Digitized by Google

While Lombardy suffered much, the neighbouring countries were not spared. The reader must be aware, that for more than a century Italy had been silently declining into that state of inactivity which succeeds great exertion, as a rapid and furious blaze sinks down into exhaustion and ashes. The keen judgment of Napoleon had seen, that the geographical shape of Italy, though presenting in many respects advantages for a great and commercial nation, offered this main impediment to its separate existence as one independent state, that its length being too great in proportion to its breadth, there was no point sufficiently central to preserve the due influence of a metropolis in relation to its extreme northern and southern provinces; and that the inhabitants of Naples and Lombardy being locally so far divided, and differing in climate, habits, and the variety of temper which climate and habits produce, could hardly be united under the same government. From these causes Italy was, after the demolition of the great Roman Empire, early broken up into different subdivisions, which, more civilized than the rest of Europe at the time, attracted in various degrees the attention of mankind; and at length, from the sacerdotal power of Rome, the wealth and extensive commerce of Venice and Genoa, the taste and splendour of Florence, and the ancient fame of the metropolis of the world, became of importance much over-proportioned to their

Digitized by Google

actual extent of territory. But this time had passed away, and the Italian States, rich in remembrances, were now comparatively poor in point of immediate consequence in the scale of nations. They retained their oligarchical or monarchical forms and constitutions, as in the more vigorous state of their existence, but appeared to have lost their energies both for good and evil. The proud and jealous love which each Italian used to bear towards his own province was much abated; the jealousy of the factions which divided most of their states, and induced the citizens to hazard their own death or exile in the most trifling party quarrel, had subsided into that calm, selfish indifference, which disregards public interests of all kinds. They were ill governed, in so far as their rulers neglected all means of benefitting the subjects or improving the country; and they were thus far well-governed, that, softened by the civilization of the times, and perhaps by a tacit sense of their own weakness, their rulers had ceased, in a great measure, to exercise with severity the despotic powers with which they were in many cases invested, though they continued to be the cause of petty vexations, to which the natives had become callous. The Vatican slept like a volcano, which had exhausted its thunders; and Venice, the most jealous and cruel of oligarchies, was now shutting her wearied eyes, and closing her ears, against

Digitized by Google

informers and spies of state. The Italian States stood, therefore, like a brotherhood of old trees, decayed at heart and root, but still making some show of branches and leaves, until the French invasion rushed down, like the whirlwind which lays them prostrate.

In the relations between France and Italy, it must be observed that two of the most considerable of these States, Tuscany and Venice, were actually in league with the former country, having acknowledged the republic, and done nothing to deserve the chastisement of her armies. Others might be termed neutral, not having perhaps deemed themselves of consequence sufficient to take part in the quarrel of the coalesced powers against France. The Pope had given offence by the affair of Basseville, and the encouragement which his countenance afforded to the non-conforming clergy of France. But excepting Naples and Austrian Lombardy, no State in Italy could be exactly said to be at open war with the new republic. Buonaparte was determined, however, that this should make no difference in his mode of treating them.

The first of these slumbering potentates with whom he came in contact, was the Duke of Parma. This petty sovereign, even before Buonaparte entered Milan, had deprecated the victor's wrath; and although neither an adherent of the coalition, nor at war with France, he found himself obliged to pur-

Digitized by Google

chase an armistice by heavy sacrifices. He paid a tribute of two millions of livres, besides furnishing horses and provisions to a large amount, and agreeing to deliver up twenty of the finest paintings in his cabinet, to be chosen by the French General.

The next of these sufferers was the Duke of Modena. This Prince was a man of moderate abilities; his business was hoarding money, and his pleasure consisted in nailing up, with his own princely hands, the tapestry which ornamented churches on days of high holiday; from which he acquired the nick-name of the royal upholsterer. But his birth was illustrious as the descendant of that celebrated hero of Este, the patron of Tasso and of Ariosto; and his alliance was no less splendid, having married the sister of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, and of Joseph the Second: then his daughter was married to the Arch-Duke Ferdinand, the Governor of Milan. Notwithstanding his double connexion with the Imperial family, the principality of Modena was so small that he might have been passed over as scarce worthy of notice, but for the temptation of his treasures, in the works of art, as well as in specie. On the approach of a column of the French army to Modena, the Duke fled from his capital, but sent his brother, the Chevalier d'Este, to capitulate with Napoleon.

It might have been urged in his favour, that he was no avowed partner in the coalition; but Buona-

Digitized by Google

parte took for granted his good will towards his brother-in-law the Emperor of Austria, and esteemed it a crime deserving atonement. Indeed it was one which had not been proved by any open action, but neither could it admit of being disproved. The Duke was therefore obliged to purchase the privilege of neutrality, and to expiate his supposed good inclination for the house of Austria. Five millions and a half of French livres, with large contributions in provisions and accoutrements, perhaps cost the Duke of Modena more anxious thoughts than he had bestowed on the misfortunes of his imperial relatives.

To levy on obnoxious states or princes the means of paying or accommodating troops, would have been only what has been practised by victors in all ages. But an exaction of a new kind was now for the first time imposed on these Italian Princes. The Duke of Modena, like the Duke of Parma, was compelled to surrender twenty of his choicest pictures, to be selected at the choice of the French General, and the persons of taste with whom he might advise. This was the first time that a demand of this nature had been made in modern times in a public and avowed manner, and we must pause to consider the motives and justice of such a requisition.

Hitherto, works of art had been considered as sacred, even during the utmost extremities of war.

Digitized by Google

They were judged to be the property, not so much of the nation or individuals who happened to possess them, as of the civilised world in general, who were supposed to have a common interest in these productions, which, if exposed to become the ordinary spoils of war, could hardly escape damage or destruction. To take a strong example of forbearance, Frederick of Prussia was a passionate admirer of the fine arts, and no scrupulous investigator of the rights conferred by conquest, but rather disposed to stretch them to the uttermost. Yet when he obtained possession of Dresden under circumstances of high irritation, Frederick respected the valuable gallery, cabinets, and museums of the capital of Saxony, and preserved their contents inviolate, as a species of property which could not, and ought not, to fall within the rights of a conqueror. He considered the Elector as only the keeper of the gallery; and regarded the articles which it contained as belonging to the civilised world at large.

There are persons who demand the cause of this distinction, and require to know why works of art, the value of which is created solely by the opinion of those who pretend to understand them, and is therefore to be regarded as merely imaginary, or, as it is called by lawyers, a mere *pretium affectionis*, should be exempted from that martial law which disposes at pleasure of the real property of the vanquished.

Digitized by Google

It might easily be shown in reply, that the respect due to genius of the highest order, attaches with a sort of religious zeal to the objects of our admiration in the fine arts, and renders it a species of sacrilege to subject them to the chances of war. It has besides already been hinted, that these chef-d'œuvres being readily liable to damage, scarcely admitting of being repaired, and absolutely incapable of being replaced, their existence is hazarded by rendering them the objects of removal, according to the fluctuation of victory.

But it is surely sufficient to say, that wherever the progress of civilization has introduced rules to qualify and soften the extremities of war, these should be strictly adhered to. In the rudest ages of society, man avails himself of the right of the strongest in the fullest extent. The victor of the Sandwich Islands devours his enemy—the North-American Indian tortures him to death—almost all savage tribes render their prisoners slaves, and sell them as such. As society advances, these inhumanities fall out of practice; and it is unnecessary to add, that, as the victorious general deserves honourable mention in history, who, by his clemency, relaxes in any respect the rigorous laws of conquest, so he must be censured in proportion, whose conduct tends to retrograde towards the brutal violence of primitive hostility.



Digitized by Google

Buonaparte cannot be exempted from this censure. He, as the willing agent of the Directory under whose commands he acted, had resolved to disregard the neutrality which had hitherto been considered as attaching to the productions of the fine arts, and, for the first time, had determined to view them as the spoils of conquest. The motive is more easily discovered than justified.

In the reign of Terror and Equality, the fine arts, with everything connected with cultivated feelings, had been regarded as inconsistent with the simplicity of the Republican character; and, like the successful fanatics of England, and the first enthusiastic votaries of the Koran, the true Sans Culottes were disposed to esteem a taste which could not generally exist without a previous superior education, as something aristocratic, and alien from the imaginary standard of equality, to which it was their purpose to lower all the exertions of intellect, as well as the possession of property. Palaces were therefore destroyed, and monuments broken to pieces.

But this brutal prejudice, with the other attempts of these frantic democrats to bring back the world to a state of barbarism, equally in moral and in general feeling, was discarded at the fall of the Jacobin authority. Those who succeeded to the government, exerted themselves laudably in endeavouring rather to excite men's minds to a love of those studies and



Digitized by Google

tastes, which are ever found to humanize and soften the general tone of society, and which teach hostile nations that they have points of friendly union, even because they unite in admiring the same master-pieces of art. A Museum was formed at Paris, for the purpose of collecting and exhibiting to public admiration paintings and statues, and whatever was excellent in art, for the amusement of the citizens, whose chief scene of pleasure hitherto had been a wild and ill-regulated civic festival, to vary the usual exhibition of the procession of a train of victims moving towards the guillotine. The substitution of such a better object of popular attention was honourable, virtuous, and politic in itself, and speedily led the French people, partly from taste, partly from national vanity, to attach consequence to the fine arts and their productions.

Unfortunately there were no ordinary measures by which the French, as purchasers, could greatly augment the contents of their Museum; and more unfortunately for other nations, and ultimately for themselves, they had the power and the will to increase their possessions of this kind, without research or expense, by means of the irresistible progress of their arms. We have no right to say that this peculiar species of spoliation originated with Buonaparte personally. He probably obeyed the orders of the Directory; and, besides, instances might no doubt

Digitized by Google

be found in the history of all nations, of interesting articles of this nature having been transferred by the chance of war from one country to another, as in cases of plunder of an ordinary description, which, though seldom avowed or defended, are not the less occasionally practised. But Napoleon was unquestionably the first and most active agent, who made such exactions a matter of course, and enforced them upon principle; and that he was heartily engaged in this scheme of general plunder, is sufficiently proved from his expressions to the Directory, upon transmitting those paintings which the Duke of Modena, the first sufferer on this system, was compelled to surrender, and which were transferred to Paris as the legitimate spoils of war.

But before copying the terms in which Napoleon announces the transmission of masterpieces of art to the National Museum, it ought to be remarked, that the celebrated Saint Jerome, by Correggio, which he mentions with a sort of insulting triumph, was accounted so valuable, that the Duke of Modena offered two millions of livres as the ransom of that picture alone. This large sum the French general, acting on the principle which many in his situation were tempted to recognize, might have safely converted to his own use, under the certainty that the appropriation, indispensable as his services were to the government, would neither have been inquired into

Digitized by Google

nor censured. But avarice cannot be the companion, far less the controller, of ambition. The feelings of the young victor were of a character too elevated to stoop to the acquisition of wealth; nor was his career, at that or any other period, sullied by this particular and most degrading species of selfishness. When his officers would have persuaded him to accept the money, as more useful for the army, he replied, that the two millions of francs would soon be spent, but the Correggio would remain an ornament of the city of Paris for ages, and inspire the production of future masterpieces.

In his dispatch to the Directory, of 17th Floreal (8th of May), Napoleon desires to have some artists sent to him, who might collect the monuments of art; which shows that the purpose of seizing upon them had been already formed. In the letter which accompanied the transmission of the pictures, he has these remarkable expressions:—"You will receive the articles of the suspension of arms which I have granted to the Duke of Parma. I will send you as soon as possible the finest pictures of Correggio, amongst others a Saint Jerome, which is said to be his masterpiece. I must own that the saint takes an unlucky time to visit Paris, but I hope you will grant him the honours of the Museum."

The same system was followed at Milan, where several of the most valuable articles were taken from

Digitized by Google

the Ambrosian collection. The articles were received in the spirit with which they were transmitted. The most able critics were dispatched to assist the general in the selection of the monuments of the fine arts to be transferred to Paris, and the Secretary-general of the Lyceum, confounding the possession of the productions of genius with the genius itself which created them, congratulated his countrymen on the noble dispositions which the victors had evinced. "It is no longer blood," said the orator, "which the French soldier thirsts for. He desires to lead no slaves in triumph behind his chariot—it is the glorious spoils of the arts and of industry with which he longs to decorate his victories—he cherishes that devouring passion of great souls, the love of glory, and the enthusiasm for high talents, to which the Greeks owed their astonishing successes. It was the defence of their temples, their monuments, their statues, their great artists, that stimulated their valour. It was from such motives they conquered at Salamis and at Marathon. It is thus that our armies advance, escorted by the love of arts, and followed by sweet peace, from Coni to Milan, and soon to proceed from thence to the proud basilic of St Peter's." The reasoning of the Secretary of the Lyceum is lost amidst his eloquence; but the speech, if it means anything, signifies, that the seizing on those admired productions placed the nation which ac-

Digitized by Google

quired the forcible possession of them, in the same condition as if she had produced the great men by whom they were achieved;—just as the ancient Scythians believed they became inspired with the talents and virtues of those whom they murdered. Or, according to another interpretation, it may mean that the French, who fought to deprive other nations of their property, had as praiseworthy motives of action as the Greeks, who made war in defence of that which was their own. But however their conduct might be regarded by themselves, it is very certain that they did by no means resemble those whose genius set the example of such splendid success in the fine arts. On the contrary, the classical prototype of Buonaparte in this transaction, was the Roman Consul Mummius, who violently plundered Greece of those treasures of art, of which he himself and his countrymen were insensible to the real and proper value.

It is indeed little to the purpose, in a moral point of view, whether the motive for this species of rapine were or were not genuine love of the art. The fingering connoisseur who secretes a gem, cannot plead in mitigation, that he stole it, not on account of the value of the stone, but for the excellence of the engraving; any more than the devotee who stole a Bible could shelter herself under a religious motive. But, in truth, we do not believe that the French or their general were actuated on this occasion by the genuine

Digitized by Google

love of art. This taste leads men to entertain respect for the objects which it admires; and feeling its genuine influence, a conqueror would decline to give an example of a species of rapine, which, depriving those objects of admiration of the protection with which the general sentiment of civilized nations had hitherto invested them, must hold them up, like other ordinary property, as a prey to the strongest soldier. Again, we cannot but be of opinion, that a genuine lover of the arts would have hesitated to tear those paintings from the churches or palaces, for the decoration of which they had been expressly painted, and where they must always have been seen to the best effect, whether from the physical advantages of the light, size of apartment, and other suitable localities connected with their original situation, or from the moral feelings which connect the works themselves with the place for which they were primarily designed, and which they had occupied for ages. The destruction of these mental connexions, which give so much additional effect to painting and statuary, merely to gratify the selfish love of appropriation, is like taking a gem out of the setting, which in many cases may considerably diminish its value.

We cannot, therefore, believe, that this system of spoliation was dictated by any sincere and manly love of the arts, though this was so much talked of in

Digitized by Google

France at the time. It must, on the contrary, be ascribed to the art and ambition of the Directory who ordered, and the General who obeyed; both of whom, being sensible that the national vanity would be flattered by this species of tribute, hastened to secure it an ample gratification. Buonaparte, in particular, was at least sufficiently aware, that, with however little purity of taste the Parisians might look upon these exquisite productions, they would be sufficiently alive to the recollection, that, being deemed by all civilized people the most admirable specimens in the world, the valour of the French armies, and the skill of their unrivalled general, had sent them to adorn the metropolis of France; and might hope, that once brought to the prime city of the Great Nation, such chef-d'-œuvres could not again be subject to danger by transportation, but must remain there, fixed as household gods, for the admiration of posterity. So hoped, as we have seen, the victor himself; and doubtless with the proud anticipation, that in future ages the recollection of himself, and of his deeds, must be inseparably connected with the admiration which the Museum, ordained and enriched by him, was calculated to produce.

But art and ambition are apt to estimate the advantages of a favourite measure somewhat too hastily. By this breach of the law of nations, as hitherto acknowledged and acted upon, the French degraded

Digitized by Google

their own character, and excited the strongest prejudice against their rapacity among the Italians, whose sense of injury was in proportion to the value which they set upon those splendid works, and to the dishonour which they felt at being forcibly deprived of them. Their lamentations were almost like those of Micah the Ephraimite, when robbed of "the graven image, and the Teraphim, and the Ephod, and the molten image," by the armed and overbearing Danites—"Ye have taken away my gods that I have made, and what have I more?"

Again, by this unjust proceeding, Buonaparte prepared for France and her capital the severe moral lesson inflicted upon her by the allies in 1815. Victory has wings as well as Riches; and the abuse of conquest, as of wealth, becomes frequently the source of bitter retribution. Had the paintings of Correggio, and other great masters, been left undisturbed in the custody of their true owners, there could not have been room, at an after period, when looking around the Louvre, for the reflection, "Here once were disposed the treasures of art, which, won by violence, were lost by defeat."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER V.

*Directory propose to divide the Army of Italy betwixt Buonaparte and Kellermann—Buonaparte resigns, and the Directory give up the point.—Insurrection against the French at Pavia—crushed—and the Leaders shot—Also at the Imperial Fiefs and Lugo, quelled and punished in the same way. —Reflections.—Austrians defeated at Borghetto, and retreat behind the Adige.—Buonaparte narrowly escapes being made Prisoner at Valeggio.—Mantua blockaded.—Verona occupied by the French.—King of Naples secedes from Austria.—Armistice purchased by the Pope.—The Neutrality of Tuscany violated, and Leghorn occupied by the French Troops.—Views of Buonaparte respecting the Revolutionizing of Italy—He temporizes.—Conduct of the Austrian Government at this Crisis.—Beaulieu displaced, and succeeded by Wurmser.—Buonaparte sits down before Mantua.*

Occupying Milan, and conqueror in so many battles, Buonaparte might be justly considered as in absolute possession of Lombardy, while the broken forces of Beaulieu had been compelled to retreat under that sole remaining bulwark of the Austrian power, the strong fortress of Mantua, where they might await such support as should be detached to them through the Tyrol, but could undertake no offensive operations. To secure his position, the Austrian general had occupied the line formed by the Mincio, his left flank resting upon Mantua, his right upon Peschiera, a Venetian city and fortress, but of which he

Digitized by Google

had taken possession, against the reclamation of the Venetian government, who were desirous of observing a neutrality between such powerful belligerents, not perhaps altogether aware how far the victor, in so dreadful a strife, might be disposed to neglect the general law of nations. The Austrian defence on the right was prolonged by the Lago di Guarda, a large lake out of which the Mincio flows, and which, running thirty-five miles northward into the mountains of the Tyrol, maintained uninterrupted Beaulieu's communication with Germany.

Buonaparte in the meantime permitted his forces only the repose of four or five days, ere he again summoned them to active exertion. He called on them to visit the Capitol, there to re-establish (he ought to have said to *carry away*) the statues of the great men of antiquity, and to change, or rather renovate, the destinies of the finest district of Europe. But while thus engaged, he received orders from Paris respecting his farther proceedings, which must have served to convince him that *all* his personal enemies, all who doubted and feared him, were not to be found in the Austrian ranks.

The Directory themselves had begun to suspect the prudence of suffering the whole harvest of success which Italy afforded, to be reaped by the adventurous and haughty character who had first thrust in the sickle. They perhaps felt already an instinctive distrust of the waxing influence, which was des-

Digitized by Google

tined one day to overpower their own. Under some such impression, they resolved to divide the army of Italy betwixt Buonaparte and Kellermann, directing the former general to pass the Po, and advance southward on Rome and Naples, with twenty thousand men; while Kellermann, with the other moiety of the Italian army, should press the siege of Mantua, and make head against the Austrians.

This was taking Buonaparte's victory out of his grasp; and he resented the proposal accordingly, by transmitting his resignation, and declining to have any concern in the loss of his army, and the fruits of his conquests. He affirmed, that Kellermann, with an army reduced to twenty thousand men, could not face Beaulieu, but would be speedily driven out of Lombardy; and that, in consequence, the army which advanced southward would be overwhelmed and destroyed. One bad general, he said, was better than two good ones. The Directory must have perceived from such a reply, the firm and inflexible nature of the man they had made the leader of their armies, but they dared not, such was his reputation, proceed in the plan they had formed for the diminution of his power; and perhaps, for the first time since the Revolution, the executive government of France was compelled to give way to a successful general, and adopt his views instead of their own. The campaign was left to his sole management; he obtained an ascendancy which he took admirable care

Digitized by Google

not to relinquish, and it became the only task of the Directory, so far as Italy was concerned, to study phrases for intimating their approbation of the young general's measures.

Whatever were the ultimate designs of Buonaparte against Rome, he thought it prudent to suspend them until he should be free from all danger of the Austrians, by the final defeat of Beaulieu. For this object, he directed the divisions of his army towards the right bank of the Mincio, with a view of once more forcing Beaulieu's position, after having taken precautions for blockading the citadel of Milan, where the Austrians still held out, and for guarding Pavia and other points, which appeared necessary to secure his conquests.

Napoleon himself fixed his head-quarters at Lodi, upon the 24th of May. But he was scarcely arrived there, when he received the alarming intelligence, that the city of Pavia, with all the surrounding districts, were in arms in his rear; that the tocsin was ringing in every village, and that news were circulated that the Prince of Condé's army, united with a strong Austrian force, had descended from the Tyrol into Italy. Some commotions had shown themselves in Milan, and the Austrian garrison there made demonstrations towards favouring the insurrection in Pavia, where the insurgents were completely successful, and had made prisoners a French corps of three hundred men.

Digitized by Google

Buonaparte represents these disturbances as effected by Austrian agents; but he had formerly assured us, that the Italians took little interest in the fate of their German masters. The truth is, that, having entered Italy with the most flattering assurances of observing respect for public and private property, the French had disgusted the inhabitants, by exacting the contributions which they had imposed on the country with great severity. As Catholics, the Italians were also disgusted with the open indignities thrown on the places and objects of public worship, as well as on the persons and character of their priests.*

The nobles and the clergy naturally saw their ruin in the success of the French; and the lower classes joined them for the time, from dislike to foreigners, love of national independence, resentment of the exactions made, and the acts of sacrilege committed by the ultramontane invaders. About thirty thousand insurgents were in arms; but having no regular forces on which to rest as a rallying point, they were ill calculated to endure the rapid assault of the disciplined French.

Buonaparte, anxious to extinguish a flame so formi-

* It has been alleged, that in a farce exhibited on the public stage by authority of Buonaparte, the Pope was introduced in his pontifical dress. This, which could not be looked on as less than sacrilege by a Catholic population, does not accord with the general conduct of Buonaparte. See, however, *Tableau des premieres Guerres de Buonaparte*, Paris, 1815, par Le Chevalier Mechaud de Villelle, p. 41.



Digitized by Google

dable, instantly returned from Lodi to Milan, at the head of a strong division, took order for the safety of the capital of Lombardy, and moved next morning towards Pavia, the centre of the insurrection. The village of Benasco, which was defended against Lannes, was taken by storm, the inhabitants put to the sword, and the place plundered and burnt. Napoleon himself arrived before Pavia, blew the gates open with his cannon, dispersed with ease the half-armed insurgents, and caused the leaders of the insurrection to be put to death, for having attempted to defend the independence of their country. He then seized on the persons of many inhabitants, and sent them to Paris as hostages for the subjection of their fellow-citizens.

The French general published a proclamation in the Republican style, in which he reproaches the insurgents for presuming to use arms in defence of their country, and menaces with fire and sword whatever individuals should in future prosecute the same daring course. He made his threat good some weeks afterwards, when a similar insurrection took place in those districts called the Imperial fiefs, and still later, when an effort at resistance was attempted in the town of Lugo. On both occasions, the leaders of the armed inhabitants were tried by a military commission, condemned, and shot. On the last, indeed, to revenge the defeat sustained by a squadron of French dragoons, Lugo was taken by storm, pillaged, burnt,

Digitized by Google

and the men put to the sword; while some credit seems to be taken by Buonaparte in his dispatches, for the clemency of the French, which spared the women and children.

It is impossible to read the account of these severities, without contrasting them with the opinions professed on other occasions, both by the republican and imperial governments of France. The first of these exclaimed as at an unheard-of cruelty, when the Duke of Brunswick, in his celebrated proclamation, threatened to treat as a brigand every Frenchman, not being a soldier, whom he should find under arms, and to destroy such villages as should offer resistance to the invading army. The French at that time considered with justice, that, if there is one duty more holy than another, it is that which calls on men to defend their native country against invasion. Napoleon, being emperor, was of the same opinion in the years 1813 and 1814, when the allies entered the French territories, and when, in various proclamations, he called on the inhabitants to rise against the invaders with the implements of their ordinary labour when they had no better arms, and "to shoot a foreigner as they would a wolf." It would be difficult to reconcile these invitations with the cruel vengeance taken on the town of Lugo, for observing a line of conduct which, in similar circumstances, Buonaparte so keenly and earnestly recommended to those whom fortune had made his own subjects.



Digitized by Google

The brief insurrection of Pavia suppressed by these severities, Buonaparte once more turned his thoughts to the strong position of the Austrians, with the purpose of reducing Beaulieu to a more decided state of disability, before he executed the threatened vengeance of the Republic on the Sovereign Pontiff. For this purpose he advanced to Brescia, and manœuvred in such a manner as induced Beaulieu, whom repeated surprises of the same kind had not put upon his guard, to believe, that either the French general intended to attempt the passage of the Mincio at the small but strong town of Peschiera, where that river issues from the Lago di Guarda, or else that, marching northward along the eastern bank, he designed to come round the head of the lake, and thus turn the right of the Austrian position. While Beaulieu disposed his forces as expecting an attack on the right of his line, Buonaparte, with his usual celerity, proposed to attack him on the centre, at Borghetto, a town situated on the Mincio, and commanding a bridge over it, about ten miles lower than Peschiera.

On the 30th May, the French general attacked, with superior force, and repulsed across the Mincio, an Austrian corps who endeavoured to cover the town. The fugitives endeavoured to demolish the bridge, and did break down one of its arches. But the French, rushing forward with impetuosity,



Digitized by Google

under cover of a heavy fire upon the retreating Austrians, repaired the broken arch so as to effect a passage, and the Mincio, passed as the Po and the Adda had been before, ceased in its turn to be a protection to the army drawn up behind it.

Beaulieu, who had his head-quarters at Valeggio, a village nearly opposite to Borghetto, hastened to retreat, and, evacuating Peschiera, marched his dismayed forces behind the Adige, leaving five hundred prisoners, with other trophies of victory, in the hands of the French. Buonaparte had designed that this day of success should have been still more decisive, for he meditated an attack upon Peschiera at the moment when the passage at Borghetto was accomplished; but ere Augereau, to whom this manœuvre was committed, had time to approach Peschiera, it was evacuated by the Austrians, who were in full retreat by Castel Nuovo, protected by their cavalry.

The left of the Austrian line, cut off from the centre by the passage of the French, had been stationed at Puzzuolo, lower on the Mincio. When Sebottendorf, who commanded the Imperial troops stationed on the left bank, heard the cannonade, he immediately ascended the river, to assist his commander-in-chief to repel the French, or to take them in flank if it was already crossed. The retreat of Beaulieu made both purposes impossible; and yet this march of Sebottendorf had almost produced a result

Digitized by Google

of greater consequence than would have been the most complete victory.

The French division which first crossed the Mincio, had passed through Valeggio without halting, in pursuit of Beaulieu, by whom the village had been just before abandoned. Buonaparte with a small retinue remained in the place, and Massena's division were still on the right bank of the Mincio, preparing their dinner. At this moment the advanced-guard of Sebottendorf, consisting of hulans and hussars, pushed into the village of Valeggio. There was but barely time to cry to arms, and, shutting the gates of the inn, to employ the general's small escort in its defence, while Buonaparte, escaping by the garden, mounted his horse, and galloped towards Massena's division. The soldiers threw aside their cookery, and marched instantly against Sebottendorf, who, with much difficulty, and not without loss, effected a retreat in the same direction as his commander-in-chief Beaulieu. This personal risk induced Buonaparte to form what he called the corps of guides, veterans of ten years' service at least, who were perpetually near his person, and, like the *Triarii* of the Romans, were employed only when the most desperate efforts of courage were necessary. Bessieres, afterwards Duke of Istria, and Mareschal of France, was placed at the head of this chosen body, which gave rise to the formation of the celebrated Imperial Guards of Napoleon.



Digitized by Google

The passage of the Mincio obliged the Austrians to retire within the frontier of the Tyrol; and they might have been considered as completely expelled from Italy, had not Mantua and the citadel of Milan still continued to display the Imperial banners. The castle of Milan was a place of no extraordinary strength, the surrender of which might be calculated on so soon as the general fate of war had declared itself against the present possessors. But Mantua was by nature one of those almost impregnable fortresses, which may long, relying on its own resources, defy any compulsion but that of famine.

The town and fortress of Mantua are situated on a species of island, five or six leagues square, called the Seraglio, produced by three lakes, which communicate with, or rather are formed by, the Mincio. This island has access to the land by five causeways, the most important of which was in 1796 defended by a regular citadel, called, from the vicinity of a ducal palace, La Favorita. Another was defended by an entrenched camp extending between the fortress and the lake. The third was protected by a hornwork. The remaining two causeways were only defended by gates and drawbridges. Mantua, low in situation, and surrounded by water, in a warm climate, is naturally unhealthy; but the air was likely to be still more destructive to a besieging army, (which necessarily lay in many respects more exposed to the elements, and were besides in greater numbers, and



Digitized by Google

less habituated to the air of the place,) than to a garrison who had been seasoned to it, and were well accommodated within the fortress.

To surprise a place so strong by a coup-de-main was impossible, though Buonaparte represents his soldiers as murmuring that such a desperate feat was not attempted. But he blockaded Mantua with a large force, and proceeded to take such other measures to improve his success, as might pave the way to future victories. The garrison was numerous, amounting to from twelve to fourteen thousand men; and the deficiencies of the fortifications, which the Austrians had neglected in over security, were made up for by the natural strength of the place. Yet of the five causeways, Buonaparte made himself master of four; and thus the enemy lost possession of all beyond the walls of the town and citadel, and had only the means of attaining the mainland through the citadel of La Favorita. Lines of circumvallation were formed, and Serrurier was left in blockade of the fortress, which the possession of four of the accesses enabled him to accomplish with a body of men inferior to the garrison.

To complete the blockade, it was necessary to come to some arrangement with the ancient republic of Venice. With this venerable government Napoleon had the power of working his own pleasure; for although the state might have raised a considerable army to assist the Austrians, to whom its senate, or,

Digitized by Google

aristocratic government, certainly bore good-will, yet, having been in amity with the French Republic, they deemed the step too hazardous, and vainly trusting that their neutrality would be respected, they saw the Austrian power completely broken for the time, before they took any active measures either to stand in their defence, or to deprecate the wrath of the victor. But when the line of the Mincio was forced, and Buonaparte occupied the Venetian territory on the left bank, it was time to seek by concessions that deference to the rights of an independent country, which the once haughty aristocracy of Venice had lost a favourable opportunity of supporting by force.

There was one circumstance which rendered their cause unfavourable. Louis XVIII., under the title of a private person, the Comte de Lisle, had received the hospitality of the republic, and was permitted to remain at Verona, living in strict seclusion. The permission to entertain this distinguished exile, the Venetian government had almost mendicated from the French revolutionary rulers, in a manner which we would term mean, were it not for the goodness of the intention, which leads us to regard the conduct of the ancient mistress of the Adriatic with pity rather than contempt. But when the screen of the Austrian force no longer existed between the invading armies of France and the Venetian territories—when the final subjugation of the north of Italy was resolved on—the Directory pe-

Digitized by Google

remptorily demanded, and the senate of Venice were obliged to grant, an order, removing the Comte de Lisle from the boundaries of the republic.

The illustrious exile protested against this breach of hospitality, and demanded, before parting, that his name, which had been placed on the golden book of the republic, should be erased, and that the armour presented by Henry IV. to Venice, should be restored to his descendant. Both demands were evaded, as might have been expected in the circumstances, and the future monarch of France left Verona on the 21st of April 1796, for the army of the Prince of Condé, in whose ranks he proposed to place himself, without the purpose of assuming any command, but only that of fighting as a volunteer in the character of the first gentleman of France. Other less distinguished emigrants, to the number of several hundreds, who had found an asylum in Italy, were, by the successes at Lodi and Borghetto, compelled to fly to other countries.

Buonaparte, immediately after the battle of Borghetto, and the passage of the Mincio, occupied the town of Verona, and did not fail to intimate to its magistrates, that if the *Pretender*, as he termed him, to the throne of France, had not left Verona before his arrival, he would have burnt to the ground a town which, acknowledging him as King of France, assumed, in doing so, the air of being itself the capital of that republic. This might, no doubt,

Digitized by Google

sound gallant in Paris; but Buonaparte knew well that Louis of France was not received in the Venetian territory as the successor to his brother's throne, but only with the hospitality due to an unfortunate prince, who, suiting his claim and title to his situation, was content to shelter his head, as a private man might have done, from the evils which seemed to pursue him.

The neutrality of Venice was, however, for the time admitted, though not entirely from respect for the law of nations; for Buonaparte is at some pains to justify himself for not having seized without ceremony on the territories and resources of that republic, although a neutral power as far as her utmost exertions could preserve neutrality. He contented himself for the time with occupying Verona, and other dependencies of Venice upon the line of the Adige. "You are too weak," he said to the Proveditore Fescarelli, "to pretend to enforce neutrality with a few hundred Sclavonians on two such nations as France and Austria. The Austrians have not respected your territory where it suited their purpose, and I must, in requital, occupy such part as falls within the line of the Adige."

But he considered that the Venetian territories to the westward should in policy be allowed to retain the character of neutral ground, which The Government, as that of Venice was emphatically called, would not, for their own sakes, permit them to

Digitized by Google

lose; while otherwise, if occupied by the French as conquerors, these timid neutrals might upon any reverse have resumed the character of fierce opponents. And, at all events, in order to secure a territory as a conquest, which, if respected as neutral, would secure itself, there would have been a necessity for dividing the French forces, which it was Buonaparte's wish to concentrate. From interested motives, therefore, if not from respect to justice, Buonaparte deferred seizing the territory of Venice when within his grasp, conscious that the total defeat of the Austrians in Italy would, when accomplished, leave the prey as attainable, and more defenceless than ever. Having disposed his army in its position, and prepared some of its divisions for the service which they were to perform as moveable columns, he returned to Milan to reap the harvest of his successes.

The first of these consisted in the defection of the King of Naples from the cause of Austria, to which, from family connexion, he had yet remained attached, though of late with less deep devotion. His cavalry had behaved better during the engagements on the Mincio, than has been of late the custom with Neapolitan troops, and had suffered accordingly. The King, discouraged with the loss, solicited an armistice, which he easily obtained; for his dominions being situated at the lower extremity of Italy, and his force extending to sixty thousand men at least, it was of importance to secure the neutrality of a power

Digitized by Google

who might be dangerous, and who was not, as matters stood, under the immediate control of the French. A Neapolitan ambassador was sent to Paris to conclude a final peace; in the meanwhile, the soldiers of the King of the Two Sicilies were withdrawn from the army of Beaulieu, and returned to their own country. The dispositions of the Court of Naples continued, nevertheless, to vacillate, as opportunity of advantage, joined with the hatred of the Queen, (sister of Marie Antoinette,) or the fear of the French military superiority, seemed to predominate.

The storm now thickened round the devoted head of the Pope. Ferrara and Bologna, the territories of which belonged to the Holy See, were occupied by the French troops. In the latter place, four hundred of the Papal troops were made prisoners, with a cardinal who acted as their officer. The latter was dismissed on his parole. But when summoned to return to the French head-quarters, his Eminence declined to obey, and amused the Republican officers a good deal, by alleging that the Pope had dispensed with his engagement. Afterwards, however, there were officers of no mean rank in the French service, who could contrive to extricate themselves from the engagement of a parole, without troubling the Pope for his interference on the occasion. Influenced by the approaching danger, the Court of Rome sent Azara, the Spanish minister, with full powers to treat for an armistice. It was a remarkable part of Buonaparte's

Digitized by Google

character, that he knew as well when to forbear as when to strike. Rome, it was true, was an enemy whom France, or at least its present rulers, both hated and despised, but the moment was then inopportune for the prosecution of their resentment. To have detached a sufficient force in that direction, would have weakened the French army in the north of Italy, where fresh bodies of German troops were already arriving, and might have been attended with great ultimate risk, since there was a possibility that the English might have transported to Italy the forces which they were about to withdraw from Corsica, amounting to six thousand men. But though these considerations recommended to Napoleon a negotiation with the Pope, his Holiness was compelled to purchase the armistice at a severe rate. Twenty-one millions of francs, in actual specie, with large contributions in forage and military stores, the cession of Ancona, Bologna, and Ferrara, not forgetting one hundred of the finest pictures, statues, and similar objects of art, to be selected according to the choice of the committee of artists who attended the French army, were the price of a respite which was not of long duration. It was particularly stipulated, with Republican ostentation, that the busts of the elder and younger Brutus were to be among the number of ceded articles; and it was in this manner that Buonaparte made good his vaunt,

Digitized by Google

of establishing in the Roman capitol the statues of the illustrious and classical dead.

The Arch-Duke of Tuscany was next to undergo the republican discipline. It is true, that prince had given no offence to the French Republic; on the contrary, he had claims of merit with them, from having been the very first power in Europe who acknowledged them as a legal government, and having ever since been in strict amity with them. It seemed also, that while justice required he should be spared, the interest of the French themselves did not oppose the conclusion. His country could have no influence on the fate of the impending war, being situated on the western side of the Appenines. In these circumstances, to have seized on his museum, however tempting, or made requisitions on his territories, would have appeared unjust towards the earliest ally of the French Republic; so Buonaparte contented himself with seizing on the Grand Duke's sea-port of Leghorn, confiscating the English goods which his subjects had imported, and entirely ruining the once flourishing commerce of the Dukedom. It was a principal object with the French to seize the British merchant vessels, who, confiding in the respect due to a neutral power, were lying in great numbers in the harbour; but the English merchantmen had such early intelligence as enabled them to set sail for Corsica, although a very great quantity of valuable goods fell into the possession of the French.

Digitized by Google

While the French general was thus violating the neutrality of the Grand Duke, occupying by surprise his valuable seaport, and destroying the commerce of his state, the unhappy prince was compelled to receive him at Florence, with all the respect due to a valued friend, and profess the utmost obligation to him for his lenity, while Manfredini, the Tuscan minister, endeavoured to throw a veil of decency over the transactions at Leghorn, by allowing that the English were more masters in that port than was the Grand Duke himself. Buonaparte disdained to have recourse to any paltry apologies. "The French flag," he said, "has been insulted in Leghorn—You are not strong enough to cause it to be respected. The Directory has commanded me to occupy the place." Shortly after, Buonaparte, during an entertainment given to him by the Grand Duke at Florence, received intelligence that the citadel of Milan had at length surrendered. He rubbed his hands with self-congratulation, and turning to the Grand Duke, observed, "that the Emperor, his brother, had now lost his last possession in Lombardy."

When we read of the exactions and indignities to which the strong reduce the weak, it is impossible not to remember the simile of Napoleon himself, who compared the alliance of France and an inferior state, to a giant embracing a dwarf. "The poor dwarf," he added, "may probably be suffocated in the arms

Digitized by Google

of his friend; but the giant does not mean it, and cannot help it."

While Buonaparte made truce with several of the old states in Italy, or rather adjourned their destruction in consideration of large contributions, he was far from losing sight of the main object of the French Directory, which was to cause the adjacent governments to be revolutionized and new-modelled on a republican form, corresponding to that of the Great Nation herself.

This scheme was, in every respect, an exceedingly artful one. In every state which the French might overrun or conquer, there must occur, as we have already repeatedly noticed, men fitted to form the members of revolutionary government, and who, from their previous situation and habits, must necessarily be found eager to do so. Such men are sure to be supported by the rabble of large towns, who are attracted by the prospect of plunder, and by the splendid promises of liberty, which they always understand as promising the equalization of property. Thus provided with materials for their edifice, the bayonets of the French army were of strength sufficient to prevent the task from being interrupted, and the French Republic had soon to greet sister states, under the government of men who held their offices by the pleasure of France, and who were obliged, therefore, to comply with all her requisitions, however unreasonable.

Digitized by Google

This arrangement afforded the French government an opportunity of deriving every advantage from the subordinate republics, which could possibly be drained out of them, without at the same time incurring the odium of making the exactions in their own name. It is a custom in some countries, when a cow who has lost her calf will not yield her milk freely, to place before the refractory animal the skin of her young one stuffed, so as to have some resemblance to life. The cow is deceived by this imposture, and yields to be milked upon seeing this representative of her offspring. In like manner, the show of independence assigned to the Batavian, and other associated republics, enabled France to drain these countries of supplies, which, while they had the appearance of being given to the governments of those who granted the supplies, passed, in fact, into the hands of their engrossing ally. Buonaparte was sufficiently aware that it was expected from him to extend the same system to Italy, and to accelerate, in the conquered countries of that fertile land, this species of political regeneration; but it would appear that, upon the whole, he thought the soil scarcely prepared for a republican harvest. He mentions, no doubt, that the natives of Bologna and Reggio, and other districts, were impatient to unite with the French as allies, and intimate friends; but even these expressions are so limited as to make it plain that the feelings of the Italians in general were not as



Digitized by Google

yet favourable to that revolution which the Directory desired, and which he endeavoured to forward.

He had, indeed, in all his proclamations, declared to the inhabitants of the invaded countries, that his war was not waged with them but with their governments, and had published the strictest orders for the discipline to be observed by his followers. But though this saved the inhabitants from immediate violence at the hand of the French soldiery, it did not diminish the weight of the requisitions with which the country at large was burthened, and to which poor and rich had to contribute their share. They were pillaged with regularity, and by order, but they were not the less pillaged; and Buonaparte himself has informed us that the necessity of maintaining the French army at their expense very much retarded the march of French principles in Italy. "You cannot," he says, with much truth, "at the same moment strip a people of their substance, and persuade them while doing so, that you are their friend and benefactor."

He mentions also, in the Saint Helena manuscripts, the regret expressed by the wise and philosophical part of the community, that the revolution of Rome, the source and director of superstitious opinions, had not been commenced; but frankly admits that the time was not come for going to such extremities, and that he was contented with plundering the Roman See of its money and valuables, waiting



Digitized by Google

until the fit moment should arrive of totally destroying that ancient hierarchy.

It was not without difficulty that Buonaparte could bring the Directory to understand and relish these temporising measures. They had formed a false idea of the country, and of the state and temper of the people, and were desirous at once to revolutionize Rome, Naples, and Tuscany.

Napoleon, more prudently, left these extensive regions under the direction of their old and feeble governments, whom he compelled in the interim to supply him with money and contributions, in exchange for a protracted existence, which he intended to destroy so soon as the fit opportunity should offer itself. What may be thought of this policy in diplomacy, we pretend not to say; but in private life it would be justly branded as altogether infamous. In point of morality, it resembles the conduct of a robber, who, having exacted the surrender of the traveller's property, as a ransom for his life, concludes his violence by murder. It is alleged, and we have little doubt with truth, that the Pope was equally insincere, and struggled only, by immediate submission, to prepare for the hour, when the Austrians should strengthen their power in Italy. But it is the duty of the historian loudly to proclaim, that the bad faith of one party in a treaty forms no excuse for that of the



Digitized by Google

other; and that national contracts ought to be, especially on the stronger side, as pure in their intent, and executed as rigidly, as if those with whom they were contracted were held to be equally sincere in their propositions. If the more powerful party judge otherwise, the means are in their hand to continue the war; and they ought to encounter their more feeble enemy by detection, and punishment of his fraud, not by anticipating the same deceitful course which their opponent has resorted to in the consciousness of his weakness,—like a hare which doubles before the hounds when she has no other hope of escape. It will be well with the world, when falsehood and finesse are as thoroughly exploded in international communication, as they are among individuals in all civilized countries.

But though those states, whose sovereigns could afford to pay for forbearance, were suffered for a time to remain under their ancient governments, it might have been thought that Lombardy, from which the Austrians had been almost totally driven, and where, of course, there was no one to compound with on the part of the old government, would have been made an exception. Accordingly, the French faction in these districts, with all the numerous class who were awakened by the hope of national independence, expected impatiently the declaration of their freedom from the Austrian yoke, and their erection, under the



Digitized by Google

protection of France, into a republic on the same model with that of the Great Nation. But although Buonaparte encouraged men who held these opinions, and writers who supported them, he had two weighty reasons for procrastinating on this point. First, if France manumitted Lombardy, and converted her from a conquered province into an ally, she must in consistency have abstained from demanding of the liberated country those supplies, by which Buonaparte's army was entirely paid and supported. Again, if this difficulty could be got over, there remained the secret purpose of the Directory to be considered. They had determined, when they should make peace with the Emperor of Austria, to exact the cession of Belgium and the territory of Luxembourg, as provinces lying convenient to France, and had resolved, that under certain circumstances, they would even give up Lombardy again to his dominion, rather than not obtain these more desirable objects. To erect a new republic in the country which they were prepared to restore to its former sovereign, would have been to throw a bar in the way of their own negotiation. Buonaparte had therefore the difficult task of at once encouraging, on the part of the republicans of Lombardy, the principles which induced them to demand a separate government, and of soothing them to expect with patience events, which he was secretly conscious might possibly never come to pass. The final

Digitized by Google

issue shall be told elsewhere. It may be just necessary to observe, that the conduct of the French towards the republicans whom they had formed no predetermination to support, was as uncandid as towards the ancient governments whom they treated with. They sold to the latter false hopes of security, and encouraged the former to express sentiments and opinions, which must have exposed them to ruin, in case of the restoration of Lombardy to its old rulers, an event which the Directory all along contemplated in secret. Such is, in almost all cases, the risk incurred by a domestic faction, who trust to carry their peculiar objects in the bosom of their own country by means of a foreign nation. Their too powerful auxiliaries are ever ready to sacrifice them to their own views of emolument.

Having noticed the effect of Buonaparte's short but brilliant campaign on other states, we must observe the effects which his victories produced on Austria herself. These were entirely consistent with her national character. The same tardiness which has long made the government of Austria slow in availing themselves of advantageous circumstances, cautious in their plans, and unwilling to adopt, or indeed to study to comprehend, a new system of tactics, even after having repeatedly experienced its terrible efficacies, is combined with the better qualities of firm determination, resolute endurance, and

Digitized by Google

unquenchable spirit. The Austrian slowness and obstinacy, which have sometimes threatened them with ruin, have, on the other hand, often been compensated by their firm perseverance and courage in adversity.

Upon the present occasion, Austria showed ample demonstration of the various qualities we have ascribed to her. The rapid and successive victories of Buonaparte, appeared to her only the rash flight of an eaglet, whose juvenile audacity had over-estimated the strength of his pinion. The Imperial Council resolved to sustain their diminished force in Italy, with such reinforcements as might enable them to reassume the complete superiority over the French, though at the risk of weakening their armies on the Rhine. Fortune in that quarter, though of a various complexion, had been on the whole more advantageous to the Austrians than elsewhere, and seemed to authorize the detaching considerable reinforcements from the eastern frontier, on which they had been partially victorious, to Italy, where, since Buonaparte had descended from the Alps, they had been uniformly unfortunate.

Beaulieu, aged and unlucky, was no longer considered as a fit opponent to his inventive, young, and active adversary. He was as full of displeasure, it is said, against the Aulic Council, for the associates whom they had assigned him, as they could

Digitized by Google

be with him for his bad success.* He was recalled, therefore, in that species of disgrace which misfortune never fails to infer, and the command of his remaining forces, now drawn back and secured within the passes of the Tyrol, was provisionally assigned to the veteran Melas.

Meanwhile Wurmser, accounted one of the best of the Austrian generals, was ordered to place himself at the head of thirty thousand men from the imperial forces on the Rhine, and, traversing the Tyrol, and collecting what recruits he could in that warlike district, to assume the command of the Austrian army, which, expelled from Italy, now lay upon its frontiers, and might be supposed eager to resume their national supremacy in the fertile climates out of which they had been so lately driven.

---

* The following letter appears in the journals as an intercepted dispatch from Beaulieu to the Aulic Council of War. It is perhaps suppositious, but seems worthy of preservation as expressing the irritated feelings with which the veteran general was certainly affected, whether he wrote the letter in question or not. It will be recollected, that D'Argenteau, of whom he complains, was the cause of his original misfortunes at Monte Notte. See p. 101. "I asked you for a *General*, and you have sent me Argenteau.—I am quite aware that he is a great lord, and that he is to be created Field-marshal of the Empire, to atone for my having placed him under arrest.—I apprize you that I have no more than twenty thousand men remaining, and that the French are sixty thousand strong. I apprize you farther, that I will retreat to-morrow—next day—the day after that—and every day—even to Siberia itself, if they pursue me so far. My age gives me right to speak out the truth. Hasten to make peace on any conditions whatsoever."—*Moniteur*, 1796. *No.* 269.

Digitized by Google

Aware of the storm which was gathering, Buonaparte made every possible effort to carry Mantua before arrival of the formidable Austrian army, whose first operation would doubtless be to raise the siege of that important place. A scheme to take the city and castle by surprise, by a detachment which should pass to the Seraglio, or islet on which Mantua is situated, by night and in boats, having totally failed, Buonaparte was compelled to open trenches, and proceed as by regular siege. The Austrian general, Canto D'Irles, when summoned to surrender it, replied that his orders were to defend the place to extremity. Napoleon, on his side, assembled all the battering ordnance which could be collected from the walls of the neighbouring cities and fortresses, and the attack and defence commenced in the most vigorous manner on both sides; the French making every effort to reduce the city before Wurmser should open his campaign, the governor determined to protract his resistance, if possible, until he was relieved by the advance of that general. But although red-hot balls were expended in profusion, and several desperate and bloody assaults and sallies took place, many more battles were to be fought, and much more blood expended, before Buonaparte was fated to succeed in this important object.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VI.

*Campaign on the Rhine.—General Plan.—Wartensleben and the Archduke Charles retire before Jourdan and Moreau.—The Archduke forms a junction with Wartensleben, and defeats Jourdan, who retires—Moreau, also, makes his celebrated Retreat through the Black Forest.—Buonaparte raises the siege of Mantua, and defeats the Austrians at Salo and Lonato.—Misbehaviour of the French General, Valette, at Castiglione.—Lonato taken, with the French artillery, on 3d August.—Retaken by Massena and Augereau.—Singular escape of Buonaparte from being captured at Lonato.—Wurmser defeated between Lonato and Castiglione, and retreats on Trent and Roveredo.—Buonaparte resumes his position before Mantua.—Effects of the French Victories on the different Italian States.—Inflexibility of Austria.—Wurmser recruited.—Battle of Roveredo.—French victorious, and Massena occupies Trent.—Buonaparte defeats Wurmser at Primolano—and at Bassano, 8th September.—Wurmser flies to Vicenza.—Battle of Arcola.—Wurmser finally shut up within the walls of Mantua.*

THE reader must, of course, be aware, that Italy, through which we are following the victorious career of Napoleon, was not the only scene of war betwixt France and Austria, but that a field of equally strenuous and much more doubtful contest was opened upon the Rhine, where the high military talents of the Archduke Charles were opposed to those of Moreau and Jourdan, the French generals.

The plan which the Directory had adopted for the campaign of 1796 was of a gigantic character, and

Digitized by Google

menaced Austria, their most powerful enemy upon the continent, with nothing short of total destruction. It was worthy of the genius of Carnot, by whom it was formed, and of Napoleon and Moreau, by whom it had been revised and approved. Under sanction of this general plan, Buonaparte regulated the Italian campaign in which he had proved so successful; and it had been schemed, that to allow Austria no breathing space, Moreau, with the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, should press forward on the eastern frontier of Germany, supported on the left by Jourdan, at the head of the Army of the Rhine, and that both generals should continue to advance, until Moreau should be in a position to communicate with Buonaparte through the Tyrol. When this junction of the whole forces of France, in the centre of the Austrian dominions, was accomplished, it was Carnot's ultimate plan that they should advance upon Vienna, and dictate peace to the Emperor under the walls of his capital.

Of this great project, the part intrusted to Buonaparte was completely executed, and for some time the fortune of war seemed equally auspicious to France upon the Rhine as in Italy. Moreau and Jourdan crossed that great national boundary at Neuwied and Kehl, and moved eastward through Germany, forming a connected front of more than sixty leagues in breadth, until Moreau had actually crossed the river Leck, and was almost touching with his right flank

Digitized by Google

the passes of the Tyrol, through which he was, according to the plan of the campaign, to have communicated with Buonaparte.

During this advance of two hostile armies, amounting each to seventy-five thousand men, which filled all Germany with consternation, the Austrian leader Wartensleben was driven from position to position by Jourdan, while the Archduke Charles was equally unable to maintain his ground before Moreau. The Imperial generals were reduced to this extremity by the loss of the army, consisting of from thirty to thirty-five thousand men, who had been detached under Wurmser to support the remains of Beaulieu's forces, and reinstate the Austrian affairs in Italy, and who were now on their march through the Tyrol for that purpose. But the Archduke was an excellent and enterprising officer, and at this important period he saved the empire of Austria by a bold and decided manœuvre. Leaving a large part of his army to make head against Moreau, or at least to keep him in check, the Archduke moved to the right with the rest, so as to form a junction with Wartensleben, and overwhelm Jourdan with a local superiority of numbers, being the very principle on which the French themselves achieved so many victories. Jourdan was totally defeated, and compelled to make a hasty and disorderly retreat, which was rendered disastrous by the insurrection of the German peasantry around his fugitive army. Moreau, also

Digitized by Google

unable to maintain himself in the heart of Germany, when Jourdan, with the army which covered his left flank, was defeated, was likewise under the necessity of retiring, but conducted his retrograde movement with such dexterity, that his retreat through the Black Forest, where the Austrians hoped to cut him off, has been always judged worthy to be compared to a great victory. Such were the proceedings on the Rhine, and in the interior of Germany, which must be kept in view as influencing, at first by the expected success of Moreau and Jourdan, and afterwards by their actual failure, the movements of the Italian army.

As the divisions of Wurmser's army began to arrive on the Tyrolese district of Trent, where the Austrian general had fixed his head-quarters, Buonaparte became urgent, either that reinforcements should be dispatched to him from France, or that the armies on the Rhine should make such a movement in advance towards the point where they might co-operate with him, as had been agreed upon at arranging the original plan of the campaign. But he obtained no succours; and though the campaign on the Rhine commenced, as we have seen, in the month of June, yet that period was too late to afford any diversion in favour of Napoleon, Wurmser and his whole reinforcements being already either by that time arrived, or on the point of arriving, at the place where they were to commence operations against the French army of Italy.



Digitized by Google

The thunder-cloud which had been so long blackening on the mountains of the Tyrol, seemed now about to discharge its fury. Wurmser, having under his command perhaps eighty thousand men, was about to march from Trent against the French, whose forces, amounting to scarce half so many, were partly engaged in the siege of Mantua, and partly dispersed in the towns and villages on the Adige and Chiese, for covering the division of Serrurier, which carried on the siege. The Austrian veteran, confident in his numbers, was only anxious so to regulate his advance, as to derive the most conclusive consequences from the victory which he doubted not to obtain. With an imprudence which the misfortunes of Beaulieu ought to have warned him against, he endeavoured to occupy with the divisions of his army so large an extent of country, as rendered it very difficult for them to maintain their communications with each other. This was particularly the case with his right wing under Quasdonowich, the Prince of Reuss, and General Ocskay, who were detached down the valley of the river Chiese, with orders to direct their march on Brescia. This division was destined to occupy Brescia, and cut off the retreat of the French in the direction of Milan. The left wing of Wurmser's army, under Melas, was to descend the Adige by both banks at once, and manœuvre on Verona, while the centre, commanded by the Austrian Field-marshal in person, was to march southward by the

Digitized by Google

left bank of the Lago di Guarda, take possession of Peschiera, which the French occupied, and, descending the Mincio, relieve the siege of Mantua. There was this radical error in the Austrian plan, that, by sending Quasdonowich's division by the valley of Chiese, Wurmser placed the broad lake of Guarda, occupied by a French flotilla, between his right wing and the rest of his army, and of course made it impossible for the centre and left to support Quasdonowich, or even to have intelligence of his motions or his fate.

The active invention of Buonaparte, sure as he was to be seconded by the zeal and rapidity of the French army, speedily devised the means to draw advantage from this dislocation of the Austrian forces. He resolved not to await the arrival of Wurmser and Melas, but, concentrating his whole strength, to march into the valley of Chiese, and avail himself of the local superiority thus obtained, to attack and overpower the Austrian division left under Quasdonowich, who was advancing on Brescia, down the eastern side of the lake. For this purpose one great sacrifice was necessary. The plan inevitably involved the raising of the siege of Mantua. Napoleon did not hesitate to relinquish this great object at whatever loss, as it was his uniform system to sacrifice all secondary views, and to incur all lesser hazards, to secure what he considered as the main object of the campaign. Serrurier, who commanded the blockading army, was



Digitized by Google

hastily ordered to destroy as much as possible of the cannon and stores which had been collected with so much pains for the prosecution of the siege. An hundred guns were abandoned in the trenches, and Wurmser, on arriving at Mantua, found that Buonaparte had retired with a precipitation resembling that of fear.

On the night of the 31st July this operation took place, and, leaving the division of Augereau at Borghetto, and that of Massena at Peschiera, to protect, while it was possible, the line of the Mincio, Buonaparte rushed, at the head of an army which his combinations had rendered superior, upon the right wing of the Austrians, which had already directed its march to Lonato, near the bottom of the Lago di Guarda, in order to approach the Mincio, and resume its communication with Wurmser. But Buonaparte, placed by the celerity of his movements between the two hostile armies, defeated one division of the Austrian right at Salo, upon the lake, and another at Lonato. At the same time, Augereau and Massena, leaving just enough of men at their posts of Borghetto and Peschiera to maintain a respectable defence against Wurmser, made a forced march to Brescia, which was occupied by another division of the Austrian right wing. But that body, finding itself insulated, and conceiving that the whole French army was debouching on them from different points, was already in full retreat towards the Tyrol, from

Digitized by Google

which it had advanced with the expectation of turning Buonaparte's flank, and destroying his retreat upon Milan. Some French troops were left to accelerate their flight, and prevent their again making head, while Massena and Augereau, rapidly countermarching, returned to the banks of the Mincio to support their respective rear-guards, which they had left at Borghetto and Peschiera, on the line of that river.

They received intelligence, however, which induced them to halt upon this counter-march. Both rear-guards had been compelled to retire from the line of the Mincio, of which river the Austrians had forced the passage. The rear-guard of Massena, under General Pigeon, had fallen back in good order, so as to occupy Lonato; that of Augereau fled with precipitation and confusion, and failed to make a stand at Castiglione, which was occupied by Austrians, who entrenched themselves there. Valette, the general who commanded this body, was deprived of his commission in presence of his troops for misbehaviour, an example which the gallantry of the French generals rendered extremely infrequent in their service.

Wurmser became now seriously anxious about the fate of his right wing, and determined to force a communication with Quasnodowich at all risks. But he could only attain the valley of the Chiese, and the right bank of the Lago di Guarda, by breaking a passage through the divisions of Massena and Au-

Digitized by Google

gereau. On the 3d of August, at break of day, two divisions of Austrians, who had crossed the Mincio in pursuit of Pigeon and Valette, now directed themselves, with the most determined resolution, on the French troops, in order to clear the way between the commander-in-chief and his right wing.

The late rear-guard of Massena, which, by his counter-march, had now become his advanced-guard, was defeated, and Lonato, the place which they occupied, was taken by the Austrians, with the French artillery, and the general officer who commanded them. But the Austrian general, thus far successful, fell into the great error of extending his line too much towards the right, in order, doubtless, if possible, to turn the French position on their left flank, thereby the sooner to open a communication with his own troops on the right bank of the Lago di Guarda, to force which had been his principal object in the attack. But in thus manœuvring he weakened his centre, an error of which Massena instantly availed himself. He formed two strong columns under Augereau, with which he redeemed the victory, by breaking through and dividing the Austrian line, and retaking Lonato at the point of the bayonet. The manœuvre is indeed a simple one, and the same by which, ten years afterwards, Buonaparte gained the battle of Austerlitz; but it requires the utmost promptitude and presence of mind to seize the exact moment for executing such a daring measure to ad-



Digitized by Google

vantage. If it is but partially successful, and the enemy retains steadiness, it is very perilous; since the attacking column, instead of flanking the broken divisions of the opposite line, may be itself flanked by decided officers and determined troops, and thus experience the disaster which it was their object to occasion to the enemy. On the present occasion, the attack on the centre completely succeeded. The Austrians, finding their line cut asunder, and their flanks pressed by the victorious columns of the French, fell into total disorder. Some, who were farthest to the right, pushed forward, in hopes to unite themselves to Quasdonowich, and what they might find remaining of the original right wing; but these were attacked in front by General Soret, who had been active in defeating Quasdonowich upon the 30th July, and were at the same time pursued by another detachment of the French, which had broken through their centre.

Such was the fate of the Austrian right at the battle of Lonato, while that of the left was no less unfavourable. They were attacked by Augereau with the utmost bravery, and driven from Castiglione, of which they had become masters by the bad conduct of Valette. Augereau achieved this important result at the price of many brave men's lives; but it was always remembered as an essential service by Buonaparte, who afterwards, when such dignities came in



Digitized by Google

use, bestowed on Augereau the title of Duke of Castiglione. After their defeat, there can be nothing imagined more confused or calamitous than the condition of the Austrian divisions, who, having attacked, without resting on each other, found themselves opposed and finally overwhelmed by an enemy who appeared to possess ubiquity, simply from his activity and power of combining his forces.

A remarkable instance of their lamentable state of disorder and confusion, resembling in its consequences more than one example of the same sort, occurred at Lonato. It might, with any briskness of intelligence, or firmness of resolution, have proved a decisive advantage to their arms; it was, in its result, a humiliating illustration, how completely the succession of bad fortune had broken the spirit of the Austrian soldiers. The reader can hardly have forgotten the incident at the battle of Millesimo, when an Austrian column which had been led astray, retook, as if it were by chance, the important village of Dego;* or the more recent instance, when a body of Beaulieu's advanced-guard, alike unwittingly, had nearly made Buonaparte prisoner in his quarters.† The present danger arose from the same cause, the confusion and want of combination of the enemy; and now, as in the former perilous occurrences, the very same circum-

* See page 106. † See page 163.

Digitized by Google

stances which brought on the danger, served to ward it off.

A body of four or five thousand Austrians, partly composed of those who had been cut off at the battle of Lonato, partly of stragglers from Quasdonowich, received information from the peasantry, that the French troops, having departed in every direction to improve their success, had only left a garrison of twelve hundred men in the town of Lonato. The commander of the division resolved instantly to take possession of the town, and thus to open his march to the Mincio, to join Wurmser. Now, it happened that Buonaparte himself, coming from Castiglione with only his staff for protection, had just entered Lonato. He was surprised when an Austrian officer was brought before him blindfolded, as is the custom on such occasions, who summoned the French commandant of Lonato to surrender to a superior force of Austrians, who, he stated, were already forming columns of attack to carry the place by irresistible force of numbers. Buonaparte, with admirable presence of mind, collected his numerous staff around him, caused the officer's eyes to be unbandaged, that he might see in whose presence he stood, and upbraided him with the insolence of which he had been guilty, in bringing a summons of surrender to the French commander-in-chief in the middle of his army. The credulous officer, recognizing the presence of Buonaparte, and

Digitized by Google

believing it impossible that he could be there without at least a strong division of his army, stammered out an apology, and returned to persuade his dispirited commander to surrender himself, and the four thousand men and upwards whom he commanded, to the comparatively small force which occupied Lonato. They grounded their arms accordingly, to one-fourth of their number, and missed an inviting and easy opportunity of carrying Buonaparte prisoner to Wurmser's head-quarters.

The Austrian general himself, whose splendid army was thus destroyed in detail, had been hitherto employed in revictualling Mantua, and throwing in supplies of every kind; besides which, a large portion of his army had been detached in the vain pursuit of Serrurier, and the troops lately engaged in the siege, who had retreated towards Marcaria. When Wurmser learned the disasters of his right wing, and the destruction of the troops dispatched to form a communication with it, he sent to recall the division which we have mentioned, and advanced against the French position between Lonato and Castiglione, with an army still numerous, notwithstanding the reverses which it had sustained. But Buonaparte had not left the interval unimproved. He had recalled Serrurier from Marcaria, to assail the left wing and the flank of the Austrian Field-marshal. The opening of Serrurier's fire was a signal for a general

Digitized by Google

attack on all points of Wurmser's line. He was defeated, and nearly made prisoner; and it was not till after suffering great losses in the retreat and pursuit, that he gained with difficulty Trent and Roveredo, the positions adjacent to the Tyrol, from which he had so lately sallied with such confidence of victory. He had lost perhaps one half of his fine army, and the only consolation which remained was, that he had thrown supplies into the fortress of Mantua. His troops also no longer had the masculine confidence which is necessary to success in war. They were no longer proud of themselves and of their commanders; and these, especially, who had sustained so many losses under Beaulieu, could hardly be brought to do their duty, in circumstances where it seemed that Destiny itself was fighting against them.

The Austrians are supposed to have lost nearly forty thousand men in these disastrous battles. The French must have at least suffered the loss of one-fourth of the number, though Buonaparte confesses only to seven thousand men; and their army, desperately fatigued by so many marches, such constant fighting, and the hardships of a campaign, where even the general for seven days never laid aside his clothes, or took any regular repose, required some time to recover their physical strength.

Meantime, Napoleon resumed his position before Mantua; but the want of battering cannon, and

Digitized by Google

the commencement of the unhealthy heats of Autumn, amid lakes and inundations, besides the great chance of a second attack on the part of Wurmser, induced him to limit his measures to a simple blockade, which, however, was so strict as to retain the garrison within the walls of the place, and cut them off even from the islet called the Seraglio.

The events of this hurried campaign threw light on the feelings of the different states of Italy. Lombardy in general remained quiet, and the citizens of Milan seemed so well affected to the French, that Buonaparte, after the victory of Castiglione, returned them his thanks in name of the Republic. But at Pavia, and elsewhere, a very opposite disposition was evinced; and at Ferrara, the Cardinal Mattei, Archbishop of that town, made some progress in exciting an insurrection. His apology, when introduced to Buonaparte's presence to answer for his conduct, consisted in uttering the single word, *Peccavi!* and Napoleon, soothed by his submission, imposed no punishment on him for his offence, but, on the contrary, used his mediation in some negotiations with the court of Rome. Yet though the Bishop of Ferrara, overawed and despised, was permitted to escape, the conduct of his superior, the Pope, who had shown vacillation in his purposes of submission, when he heard of the temporary raising of the siege of Mantua, was carefully noted and remembered for

Digitized by Google

animadversion, when a suitable moment should occur.

Nothing is more remarkable, during these campaigns, than the inflexibility of Austria, which, reduced to the extremity of distress by the advance of Moreau and Jourdan into her territories, stood nevertheless on the defensive at every point, and by extraordinary exertions again recruited Wurmser with fresh troops, to the amount of twenty thousand men; which reinforcement enabled that general, though under no more propitious star, again to resume the offensive, by advancing from the Tyrol. Wurmser, with less confidence than before, hoped now to relieve the siege of Mantua a second time, and at a less desperate cost, by moving from Trent towards Mantua, through the defiles formed by the river Brenta. This manœuvre he proposed to execute with thirty thousand men, while he left twenty thousand, under General Davidowich, in a strong position at or near Roveredo, for the purpose of covering the Tyrol; an invasion of which district, on the part of the French, must have added much to the general panic which already astounded Germany, from the apprehended advance of Moreau and Jourdan from the banks of the Rhine.

Buonaparte penetrated the design of the veteran general, and suffered him without disturbance to march towards Bassano upon the Brenta, in order to occupy the line of operations on which he intend-

Digitized by Google

ed to manœuvre, with the secret intention that he would himself assume the offensive, and overwhelm Davidowich as soon as the distance betwixt them precluded a communication betwixt that general and Wurmser. He left General Kilmaine, an officer of Irish extraction in whom he reposed confidence, with about three thousand men, to cover the siege of Mantua, by posting himself under the walls of Verona, while, concentrating a strong body of forces, Napoleon marched upon the town of Roveredo, situated in the valley of the Adige, and having in its rear the strong position of Calliano. The town is situated on the high road to Trent, and Davidowich lay there with twenty-five thousand Austrians, intended to protect the Tyrol, while Wurmser moved down the Brenta, which runs in the same direction with the Adige, but at about thirty miles' distance, so that no communication for mutual support could take place between Wurmser and his lieutenant-general. It was upon Davidowich that Buonaparte first meant to pour his thunder.

The battle of Roveredo, fought upon the fourth of September, was one of that great general's splendid days. Before he could approach the town, one of his divisions had to force the strongly entrenched camp of Mori, where the enemy made a desperate defence. Another attacked the Austrians on the opposite bank of the Adige, (for the action took place

Digitized by Google

on both sides of the river,) until the enemy at length retreated, still fighting desperately. Napoleon sent his orders to General Dubois, to charge with the first regiment of hussars—he did so, and broke the enemy, but fell mortally wounded with three balls. "I die," he said, "for the Republic—bring me but tidings that the victory is certain."

The retreating enemy were driven through the town of Roveredo, without having it in their power to make a stand. The extreme strength of the position of Calliano seemed to afford them rallying ground. The Adige is there bordered by precipitous mountains, approaching so near its course, as only to leave a pass of forty toises breadth between the river and the precipice, which opening was defended by a village, a castle, and a strong defensive wall resting upon the rock, all well garnished with artillery. The French, in their enthusiasm of victory, could not be stopped even by these obstacles. Eight pieces of light artillery were brought forward, under cover of which the infantry charged and carried this strong position; so little do natural advantages avail when the minds of the assailants are influenced with an opinion that they are irresistible, and those of the defenders are depressed by a uniform and uninterrupted course of defeat. Six or seven thousand prisoners, and fifteen pieces of cannon captured, were the fruits of this splendid

Digitized by Google

victory; and Massena the next morning took possession of Trent in the Tyrol, so long the strong-hold where Wurmser had maintained his head-quarters.

The wrecks of Davidowich's army fled deeper into the Tyrol, and took up their position at Lavisa, a small village on a river of a similar name, about three leagues to the northward of Trent, and situated in the principal road which communicates with Brixen and Inspruck. Buonaparte instantly pursued them with a division of his army, commanded by Vaubois, and passed the Lavisa with his cavalry, while the enemy were amused with an assault upon the bridge. Thus he drove them from their position, which, being the entrance of one of the chief defiles of the Tyrol, it was of importance to secure, and it was occupied accordingly by Vaubois with his victorious division.

Buonaparte, in consequence of his present condition, became desirous to conciliate the martial inhabitants of the Tyrol, and published a proclamation, in which he exhorted them to lay down their arms, and return to their homes; assuring them of protection against military violence, and labouring to convince them, that they had themselves no interest in the war, which he waged against the Emperor and his government, but not against his subjects. That his conduct might appear to be of a piece with his reasoning, Napoleon issued an edict, disuniting the princi-

Digitized by Google

pality of Trent from the German empire, and annexing it in point of sovereignty to the French Republic, while he intrusted, or seemed to intrust, the inhabitants themselves, with the power of administering their own laws and government.

Bounties which depended on the gift of an armed enemy, appeared very suspicious to the Tyrolese, who were aware that in fact the order of a French officer would be more effectual law, whenever that nation had the power, than that of any administrator of civil affairs whom they might themselves be permitted to choose. As for the proclamation, the French general might as well have wasted his eloquence on the rocks of the country. The Tyrol, one of the earliest possessions of the House of Austria, had been uniformly governed by those princes with strict respect to the privileges of the inhabitants, who were possessed already of complete personal freedom. Secured in all the immunities which were necessary for their comfort, these sagacious peasants saw nothing to expect from the hand of a stranger general, excepting what Buonaparte himself has termed, those vexations necessarily annexed to a country which becomes the seat of war, and which, in more full detail, include whatever the avarice of the general, the necessities of the soldiers, not to mention the more violent outrage of marauders and plunderers, may choose to exact from the inhabitants

Digitized by Google

But, besides this prudent calculation of consequences, the Tyrolese felt the generous spirit of national independence, and resolved that their mountains should not be dishonoured by the march of an armed enemy, if the unerring rifle-guns of their children were able to protect their native soil from such indignity. Every mode of resistance was prepared; and it was then that those piles of rocks, stones, and trunks of trees, were collected on the verge of the precipices which line the valley of the Inn, and other passes of the Tyrol, but which remained in grim repose till rolled down, to the utter annihilation of the French and Bavarian invaders in 1809, under the directions of the valiant Hoffer and his companions in arms.

More successful with the sword than the pen, Buonaparte had no sooner disposed of Davidowich and his army, than he began his operations against Wurmser himself, who had by this time learned the total defeat of his subordinate division, and that the French were possessed of Trent. The Austrian Field-marshal immediately conceived that the French general, in consequence of his successes, would be disposed to leave Italy behind, and advance to Inspruck, in order to communicate with the armies of Moreau and Jourdan, which were now on the full advance into Germany. Instead, therefore, of renouncing his own scheme of relieving Mantua, Wurm-

Digitized by Google

ser thought the time favourable for carrying it into execution; and in place of falling back with his army on Friuli, and thus keeping open his communication with Vienna, he committed the great error of involving himself still deeper in the Italian passes to the southward, by an attempt, with a diminished force, to execute a purpose, which he had been unable to accomplish when his army was double the strength of the French. With this ill-chosen plan, he detached Mezaros with a division of his forces, to manœuvre on Verona, where, as we have seen, Buonaparte had stationed Kilmaine, to cover the siege, or rather the blockade, of Mantua. Mezaros departed accordingly, and leaving Wurmser at Bassano on the Brenta, marched south-westward towards the collateral valley of the Adige, and attacked Kilmaine, who, by drawing his men under cover of the fortifications of Verona, made a resolute defence. The Austrian general, finding it impossible to carry the place by a coup-de-main, was meditating to cross the Adige, when he was recalled by the most urgent commands to rejoin Wurmser with all possible dispatch.

As soon as Buonaparte learned this new separation of Wurmser from a large division of his army, he anticipated the possibility of defeating the Field-marshal himself, driving him from his position at Bassano, and of consequence, cutting off at his leisure the division of Mezaros, which had advanced so far

Digitized by Google

to the southward as effectually to compromise its safety.

To execute this plan required the utmost rapidity of movement; for, should Wurmser learn that Buonaparte was advancing towards Bassano, in time to recall Mezaros, he might present a front too numerous to be attacked with hope of success. There are twenty leagues' distance betwixt Trent and Bassano, and that ground was to be traversed by means of very difficult roads, in the space of two days at farthest. But it was in such circumstances that the genius of Napoleon triumphed, through the enthusiastic power which he possessed over the soldiery, and by which he could urge them to the most incredible exertions. He left Trent on the 6th September at break of day, and reached, in the course of the evening, Borgo di Val Lugano, a march of ten French leagues. A similar forced march of five leagues and upwards, brought him up with Wurmser's advanced-guard, which was strongly posted at Primolano.

The effect of the surprise, and the impetuosity of the French attack, surmounted all the advantages of position. The Austrian double lines were penetrated by a charge of three French columns—the cavalry occupied the high road, and cut off the enemy's retreat on Bassano—in a word, Wurmser's van-guard was totally destroyed, and more than four thousand men laid down their arms. From Primolano the



Digitized by Google

French, dislodging whatever enemies they encountered, advanced to Cismone, a village, where a river of the same name unites with the Brenta. There they halted, exhausted with fatigue ; and on that evening no sentinel in the army endured more privations than Napoleon himself, who took up his quarters for the night without either staff-officers or baggage, and was glad to accept a share of a private soldier's ration of bread, of which the poor fellow lived to remind his general when he was become Emperor.

Cismone is only about four leagues from Bassano, and Wurmser heard with alarm, that the French leader, whom he conceived to be already deeply engaged in the Tyrolese passes, had destroyed his vanguard, and was menacing his own position. It was under this alarm that he dispatched expresses, as already mentioned, to recall Mezaros and his division. But it was too late ; for that general was under the walls of Verona, nigh fifteen leagues from Wurmser's position, on the night of the 7th September, when the French army was at Cismone, within a third part of that distance. The utmost exertions of Mezaros could only bring his division as far as Montebello, upon the 8th September, when the battle of Bassano seemed to decide the fate of his unfortunate commander-in-chief.

This victory was as decisive as any which Buonaparte had hitherto obtained. The village of Salagna was first carried by main force, and then the French

Digitized by Google

army, continuing to descend the defiles of the Brenta, attacked Wurmser's main body, which still lay under his own command in the town of Bassano. Augereau penetrated into the town upon the right, Massena upon the left. They bore down all opposition, and seized the cannon by which the bridge was defended, in spite of the efforts of the Austrian grenadiers, charged with the duty of protecting Wurmser and his staff, who were now in absolute flight.

The Field-marshal himself, with the military chest of his army, nearly fell into the hands of the French; and though he escaped for the time, it was after an almost general dispersion of his troops. Six thousand Austrians surrendered to Buonaparte; Quasdonowich, with three or four thousand men, effected a retreat to the north-east, and gained Friuli; while Wurmser himself, finding it impossible to escape otherwise, fled to Vicenza in the opposite direction, and there united the scattered forces which still followed him, with the division of Mezaros. When this junction was accomplished, the aged Marshal had still the command of about sixteen thousand men, out of sixty thousand, with whom he had, scarce a week before, commenced the campaign. The material part of his army, guns, waggons, and baggage, was all lost —his retreat upon the hereditary states of Austria was entirely cut off—the flower of his army was destroyed—courage and confidence were gone—there



Digitized by Google

seemed no remedy but that he should lay down his arms to the youthful conqueror by whose forces he was now surrounded on all sides, without, as it appeared, any possibility of extricating himself. But Fate itself seemed to take some tardy compassion on this venerable and gallant veteran, and not only adjourned his final fall, but even granted him leave to gather some brief-dated laurels, as the priests of old were wont to garland their victims before the final sacrifice.

Surrounded by dangers, and cut off from any other retreat, Wurmser formed the gallant determination to throw himself and his remaining forces into Mantua, and share the fate of the beleaguered fortress which he had vainly striven to relieve. But to execute this purpose it was necessary to cross the Adige, nor was it easy to say how this was to be accomplished. Verona, one point of passage, was defended by Kilmaine, who had already repulsed Mezaros. Legnago, where there was a bridge, was also garrisoned by the French; and Wurmser had lost his bridge of pontoons at the battle of Bassano. At the village of Albarado, however, there was an established ferry, totally insufficient for passing over so considerable a force with the necessary dispatch, but which Wurmser used for the purpose of sending across two squadrons of cavalry, in order to reconnoitre the blockade of Mantua, and the facilities which might present themselves for accomplishing a retreat on



Digitized by Google

that fortress. This precaution proved for the time the salvation of Wurmser, and what remained of his army.

Fortune, which has such influence in warlike affairs, had so ordered it, that Kilmaine, apprehending that Wurmser would attempt to force a passage at Verona, and desirous to improve his means of resistance against so great a force, had sent orders that the garrison of four hundred men who guarded the bridge at Legnago should join him at Verona, and that an equal number should be detached from the blockade of Mantua, to supply their place on the Lower Adige. The former part of his command had been obeyed, and the garrison of Legnago were on their march for Verona. But the relief which was designed to occupy their post, though on their way to Legnago, had not yet arrived. The Austrian cavalry, who had passed over at Albarado, encountering this body on its march from the vicinity of Mantua, attacked them with spirit, and sabred a good many. The commander of the French battalion, confounded at this appearance, concluded that the whole Austrian army had gained the right bank of the Adige, and that he should necessarily be cut off if he prosecuted his march to Legnago. Thus the passage at that place was left altogether undefended; and Wurmser, apprised of this unhoped-for chance of escape, occupied the village, and took possession of the bridge.

Digitized by Google

Buonaparte, in the meantime, having moved from Bassano to Arcola in pursuit of the defeated enemy, learned at the latter place that Wurmser still lingered at Legnago, perhaps to grant his troops some indispensable repose, perhaps to watch whether it might be even yet possible to give the slip to the French divisions by which he was surrounded, and, by a rapid march back upon Padua, to regain his communication with the Austrian territories, instead of inclosing himself in Mantua. Buonaparte hastened to avail himself of these moments of indecision. Augereau was ordered to march upon Legnago by the road from Padua, so as to cut off any possibility of Wurmser's retreat in that direction; while Massena's division was thrown across the Adige by a ferry at Ronco, to strengthen General Kilmaine, who had already occupied the line of a small river called the Molinella, which intersects the country between Legnago and Mantua. If this position could be made good, it was concluded that the Austrian general, unable to reach Mantua, or to maintain himself at Legnago, must even yet surrender himself and his army.

On the 12th September, Wurmser began his march. He was first opposed at Corea, where Murat and Pigeon had united their forces. But Wurmser made his dispositions, and attacked with a fury which swept out of the way both the cavalry and infantry of the enemy, and obtained possession of the

Digitized by Google

village. In the heat of the skirmish, and just when the French were giving way, Buonaparte himself entered Corea, with the purpose of personally superintending the dispositions made for intercepting the retreat of Wurmser, when, but for the speed of his horse, he had nearly fallen as a prisoner into the hands of the general whose destruction he was labouring to insure. Wurmser arrived on the spot a few minutes afterwards, and gave orders for a pursuit in every direction; commanding, however, that the French general should, if possible, be taken alive—a conjunction of circumstances worthy of remark, since it authorised the Austrian general for the moment to pronounce on the fate of him, who, before and after, was the master of his destiny.

Having again missed this great prize, Wurmser continued his march all night, and turning aside from the great road, where the blockading army had taken measures to intercept him, he surprised a small bridge over the Molinella, at a village called Villa Impenta, by which he eluded encountering the forces of Kilmaine. A body of French horse, sent to impede his progress, was cut to pieces by the Austrian cavalry. On the 14th, Wurmser obtained a similar success at Castel-Dui, where his cuirassiers destroyed a body of French infantry; and having now forced himself into a communication with Mantua, he encamped between the suburb of Saint George and the citadel, and en-

Digitized by Google

deavoured to keep open the communication with the country, for the purpose of obtaining a supply of forage and provisions.

But it was not Buonaparte's intention to leave him undisturbed in so commodious a position. Having received the surrender of an Austrian corps which was left in Porto Legnago, and gleaned up such other remnants of Wurmser's army as could not accompany their general in his rapid march to Mantua, he resolved once more to force his way into the islet of the Seraglio, upon which Mantua is built, and confine the besieged within the walls of their garrison. On the 15th, after a very severe and bloody action, the French obtained possession of the suburb of Saint George, and the citadel termed La Favorita, and a long series of severe sallies and attacks took place, which, although gallantly fought by the Austrians, generally tended to their disadvantage, so that they were finally again blockaded within the walls of the city and castle.

The woes of war now appeared among them in a different and even more hideous form than when inflicted with the sword alone. When Wurmser threw himself into Mantua, the garrison might amount to twenty-six thousand men; yet ere October was far advanced, there were little above the half of the number fit for service. There were nearly nine thousand sick in the hospitals,—infectious diseases, privations of

Digitized by Google

every kind, and the unhealthy air of the lakes and marshes with which they were surrounded, had cut off the remainder. The French also had lost great numbers; but the conquerors could reckon up their victories, and forget the price at which they had been purchased.

It was a proud vaunt, and a cure in itself for many losses, that the Minister of War had a right to make the following speech to the Directory, at the formal introduction of Marmont, then aid-de-camp of Buonaparte, and commissioned to present on his part the colours and standards taken from the enemy:—"In the course of a single campaign," he truly said, "Italy had been entirely conquered—three large armies had been entirely destroyed—more than fifty stand of colours had been taken by the victors—forty thousand Austrians had laid down their arms—and, what was not the least surprising part of the whole, these deeds had been accomplished by an army of only thirty thousand Frenchmen, commanded by a general scarce twenty-six years old."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VII.

*Corsica re-united with France.—Critical situation of Buonaparte in Italy at this period.—The Austrian General Alvinzi placed at the head of a new Army.—Various Contests, attended with no decisive result.—Want of concert among the Austrian Generals.—French Army begin to murmur.—First Battle of Arcola.—Napoleon in personal danger.—No decisive result.—Second Battle of Arcola—The French victorious.—Fresh want of concert among the Austrian Generals.—General Views of Military and Political Affairs, after the conclusion of the fourth Italian Campaign.—Austria commences a fifth Campaign—but has not profited by experience.—Battle of Rivoli, and Victory of the French.—Further successful at La Favorita.—French regain their lost ground in Italy.—Surrender of Mantua.—Instances of Napoleon's Generosity.*

About this period the re-union of Corsica with France took place. Buonaparte contributed to this change in the political relations of his native country indirectly, in part by the high pride which his countrymen must have originally taken in his splendid career; and he did so more immediately, by seizing the town and port of Leghorn, and assisting those Corsicans, who had been exiled by the English party, to return to their native island. He intimated the event to the Directory, and stated that he had appointed Gentili, the principal partizan of the French, to govern the island provisionally; and that the Commissioner Salicetti was to set sail for the purpose of

Digitized by Google

making other necessary arrangements. The communication is coldly made, nor does Buonaparte's love of his birth-place induce him to expatiate upon its importance, although the Directory afterwards made the acquisition of that island a great theme of exultation. But his destinies had called him to too high an elevation to permit his distinguishing the obscure islet which he had arisen from originally. He was like the young lion, who, while he is scattering the herds and destroying the hunters, thinks little of the forest-cave in which he first saw the light.*

Indeed Buonaparte's situation, however brilliant, was at the same time critical, and required his undivided thoughts. Mantua still held out, and was likely to do so. Wurmser had caused about three-fourths of the horses belonging to his cavalry to be killed and salted for the use of the garrison, and thus made a large

* We have said (p. 24) that Buonaparte never distinguished his native country after his high exaltation, and did not of course possess the affection of the inhabitants in a strong degree. But in his Memoirs, while at St Helena, he gives a sketch of the geographical description and history of Corsica, and suggests several plans for civilization of his countrymen,—one of which, the depriving them of the arms which they constantly wear, might be prudent were it practicable, but certainly would be highly unpalatable. There is an odd observation, "that the Crown of Corsica must, on the temporary annexation of the island to Great Britain, have been surprised at finding itself appertaining to the successor of Fingal." Not more we should think than the diadem of France, and the Iron Crown of Italy, may have marvelled at meeting on the brow of a Corsican soldier of fortune.

Digitized by Google

addition, such as it was, to the provisions of the place. His character for courage and determination was completely established; and being now engaged in defending a fortress by ordinary rules of art, which he perfectly understood, he was in no danger of being over-reached and out-manœuvred by the new system of tactics, which occasioned his misfortunes in the open field.

While, therefore, the last pledge of Austria's dominions in Italy was confided to such safe custody, the Emperor and his ministers were eagerly engaged in making a new effort to recover their Italian territories. The defeat of Jourdan, and the retreat of Moreau before the Archduke Charles, had given the Imperialists some breathing time, and enabled them, by extensive levies in the warlike province of Illyria, as well as draughts from the army of the Rhine, to take the field with a new army, for the recovery of the Italian provinces, and the relief of Mantua. By orders of the Aulic Council, two armies were assembled on the Italian frontier; one at Friuli, which was partly composed of that portion of the army of Wurmser, which, cut off from their main body at the battle of Bassano, had effected, under Quasdonowich, a retreat in that direction; the other was to be formed on the Tyrol. They were to operate in conjunction, and both were placed under the command of Marshal Alvinzi, an officer of high reputation, which was then thought merited.

Digitized by Google

Thus, for the fourth time, Buonaparte was to contest the same objects on the same ground, with new forces belonging to the same enemy. He had, indeed, himself, received from France reinforcements to the number of twelve battalions, from those troops which had been formerly employed in La Vendée. The army, in general, since victory had placed the resources of the rich country which they occupied at the command of their leader, had been well supplied with clothes, food, and provisions, and were devotedly attached to the chief who had conducted them from starving on the barren Alps into this land of plenty, and had directed their military efforts with such skill, that they could scarce ever be said to have failed of success in whatever they undertook under his direction.

Napoleon had also on his side the good wishes, if not of the Italians in general, of a considerable party, especially in Lombardy, and friends and enemies were alike impressed with belief in his predestined success. During the former attempts of Wurmser, a contrary opinion had prevailed, and the news that the Austrians were in motion, had given birth to insurrections against the French in many places, and to the publication of sentiments unfavourable to them almost everywhere. But now, when all predicted the certain success of Napoleon, the friends of Austria remained quiet, and the numerous party who desire in such cases to keep on the winning side, added weight

Digitized by Google

to the actual friends of France, by expressing their opinions in her favour. It seems, however, that Victory, as if displeased that mortals should presume to calculate the motives of so fickle a deity, was, on this occasion, disposed to be more coy than formerly even to her greatest favourite, and to oblige him to toil harder than he had done even when the odds were more against him.

Davidowich commanded the body of the Austrians which was in the Tyrol, and which included the fine militia of that martial province. There was little difficulty in prevailing on them to advance into Italy, convinced as they were that there was small security for their national independence while the French remained in possession of Lombardy. Buonaparte, on the other hand, had placed Vaubois in the passes upon the river Lavisa, above Trent, to cover that new possession of the French Republic, and check the advance of Davidowich. It was the plan of Alvinzi to descend from Friuli, and approach Vicenza, to which place he expected Davidowich might penetrate by a corresponding movement down the Adige. Having thus brought his united army into activity, his design was to advance on Mantua, the constant object of bloody contention. He commenced his march in the beginning of October 1796.

As soon as Buonaparte heard that Alvinzi was in motion, he sent orders to Vaubois to attack Davido-

Digitized by Google

wich, and to Massena to advance to Bassano upon the Brenta, and make head against the Austrian commander-in-chief. Both measures failed in effect.

Vaubois indeed made his attack, but so unsuccessfully, that after two days' fighting he was compelled to retreat before the Austrians, to evacuate the city of Trent, and to retreat upon Calliano, already mentioned as a very strong position, in the previous account of the battle of Roveredo.* A great part of his opponents being Tyrolese, and admirably calculated for mountain warfare, they forced Vaubois from a situation which was almost impregnable; and their army, descending the Adige upon the right bank, appeared to manœuvre with the purpose of marching on Montebaldo and Rivoli, and thus opening the communication with Alvinzi.

On the other hand, though Massena had sustained no loss, for he avoided an engagement, the approach of Alvinzi, with a superior army, compelled him to evacuate Bassano, and to leave the enemy in undisputed possession of the valley of the Brenta. Buonaparte, therefore, himself, saw the necessity of advancing with Augereau's division, determined to give battle to Alvinzi, and force him back on the Piave before the arrival of Davidowich. But he experienced unusual resistance; and it is amid com-

* Page 201.

Digitized by Google

plaints of the weather, of misadventures and miscarriages of different sorts, that he faintly claims the name of a victory for his first encounter with Alvinzi. It is clear that he had made a desperate attempt to drive the Austrian general from Bassano—that he had not succeeded; but, on the contrary, was under the necessity of retreating to Vicenza. It is further manifest, that Buonaparte was sensible this retreat did not accord well with his claim of victory; and he says, with a consciousness which is amusing, that the inhabitants of Vicenza were surprised to see the French army retire through their town, as they had been witnesses of their victory on the preceding day. No doubt there was room for astonishment, if the Vicenzans had been as completely convinced of the fact as Buonaparte represents them. The truth was, Buonaparte was sensible that Vaubois, being in complete retreat, was exposed to be cut off unless he was supported, and he hasted to prevent so great a loss, by meeting and reinforcing him. His own retrograde movement, however, which extended as far as Verona, left the whole country betwixt the Brenta and Adige open to the Austrians; nor does there occur, to those who read the account of the campaign, any good reason why Davidowich and Alvinzi, having no body of French to interrupt their communication, should not instantly have adjusted their operations on a common basis. But it was the bane of the

Digitized by Google

Austrian tactics, through the whole war, to neglect that connexion and co-operation betwixt their separate divisions, which is essential to secure the general result of a campaign. Above all, as Buonaparte himself remarked of them, their leaders were not sufficiently acquainted with the value of time in military movements.

Napoleon having retreated to Verona, where he could at pleasure assume the offensive by means of the bridge, or place the Adige between himself and the enemy, visited, in the first place, the positions of Rivoli and Corona, where were stationed the troops which had been defeated by Davidowich.

They appeared before him with dejected countenances, and Napoleon upbraided them with their indifferent behaviour. "You have displeased me," he said;—"You have shown neither discipline, nor constancy, nor bravery. You have suffered yourselves to be driven from positions where a handful of brave men might have arrested the progress of a large army. You are no longer French soldiers.—Let it be written on their colours—'They are not of the Army of Italy.'" Tears, and groans of sorrow and shame, answered this harangue—the rules of discipline could not stifle their sense of mortification, and several of the grenadiers, who had deserved and wore marks of distinction, called out from the ranks—"General, we have been misrepresented—Place us

Digitized by Google

in the advance, and you may then judge whether we do not belong to the Army of Italy." Buonaparte having produced the necessary effect, spoke to them in a more conciliatory tone; and the regiments who had undergone so severe a rebuke, redeemed their character in the subscquent part of the campaign.

While Napoleon was indefatigable in concentrating his troops on the right bank of the Adige, and inspiring them with his own spirit of enterprise, Alvinzi had taken his position on the left bank, nearly opposite to Verona. His army occupied a range of heights called Caldiero, on the left of which, and somewhat in the rear, is the little village of Arcola, situated among marshes, which extend around the foot of that eminence. Here the Austrian general had stationed himself, with a view, it may be supposed, to wait until Davidowich and his division should descend the right bank of the Adige, disquiet the French leader's position on that river, and give Alvinzi himself the opportunity of forcing a passage.

Buonaparte, with his usual rapidity of resolution, resolved to drive the Austrian from his position on Caldiero, before the arrival of Davidowich. But neither on this occasion was fortune propitious to him. A strong French division, under Massena, attacked the heights amid a storm of rain; but their most strenuous exertions proved completely unsuccessful, and left to the general only his usual mode of concealing a check, by railing at the elements.



Digitized by Google

The situation of the French became critical, and, what was worse, the soldiers perceived it; and complained that they had to sustain the whole burden of the war, had to encounter army after army, and must succumb at last under the renewed and unwearied efforts of Austria. Buonaparte parried these natural feelings as well as he could, promising that their conquest of Italy should be speedily sealed by the defeat of this Alvinzi; and he applied his whole genius to discover the means of bringing the war to an effective struggle, in which he confided that, in spite of numbers, his own talents, and the enterprising character of an army so often victorious, might assure him a favourable result. But it was no easy way to discover a mode of attacking, with even plausible hopes of success. If he advanced northward on the right bank to seek out and destroy Davidowich, he must weaken his line on the Adige, by the troops withdrawn to effect that purpose; and during his absence, Alvinzi would probably force the passage of the river at some point, and thus have it in his power to relieve Mantua. The heights of Caldiero, occupied by the Austrian main-body, and lying in his front, had, by dire experiment, been proved impregnable.

In these doubtful circumstances the bold scheme occurred to the French general, that the position of Caldiero, though it could not be stormed, might be



Digitized by Google

turned, and that by possessing himself of the village of Arcola, which lies to the left, and in the rear of Caldiero, the Austrians might be compelled to fight to disadvantage. But the idea of attacking Arcola was one which would scarce have occurred to any general save Buonaparte.

Arcola is situated upon a small stream called the Alpon, which, as already hinted, finds its way into the Adige, through a wilderness of marshes, intersected with ditches, and traversed by dikes in various directions. In case of an unsuccessful attack, the assailants were like to be totally cut off in the swamps. Then to debouche from Verona, and move in the direction of Arcola, would have put Alvinzi and his whole army on their guard. Secrecy and celerity are the soul of enterprise. All these difficulties gave way before Napoleon's genius.

Verona, it must be remembered, is on the left bank of the Adige—on the same with the point which was the object of Buonaparte's attack. At nightfall, the whole forces at Verona were under arms; and leaving fifteen hundred men under Kilmaine to defend the place from any assault, with strict orders to secure the gates, and prevent all communication of his nocturnal expedition to the enemy, Buonaparte commenced his march at first to the rear, in the direction of Peschiera; which seemed to imply that his resolution was at length taken to resign the



Digitized by Google

hopes of gaining Mantua, and perhaps to abandon Italy. The silence with which the march was conducted, the absence of all the usual rumours which used in the French army to precede a battle, and the discouraging situation of affairs, appeared to presage the same issue. But after the troops had marched a little way in this direction, the heads of columns were wheeled to the left, out of the line of retreat, and descended the Adige as far as Ronco, which they reached before day. Here a bridge had been prepared, by which they passed over the river, and were placed on the same bank with Arcola, the object of their attack, and lower than the heights of Caldiero.

There were three causeways by which the marsh of Arcola is traversed—each was occupied by a French column. The central column moved on the causeway which led to the village so named. The dikes and causeways were not defended, but Arcola and its bridge were protected by two battalions of Croats with two pieces of cannon, which were placed in a position to enfilade the causeway. These received the French column with so heavy a fire on its flank, that it fell back in disorder. Augereau rushed forward upon the bridge with his chosen grenadiers; but, enveloped as they were in a destructive fire, they were driven back on the main body.

Alvinzi, who conceived it only an affair of light troops, sent, however, forces into the marsh by means

Digitized by Google

of the dikes which traversed them, to drive out the French. These were checked by finding that they were to oppose strong columns of infantry, yet the battle continued with unabated vigour. It was essential to Buonaparte's plan that Arcola should be carried; but the fire continued tremendous. At length, to animate his soldiers to a final exertion, he caught a stand of colours, rushed on the bridge, and planted them there with his own hand. A fresh body of Austrians arrived at that moment, and the fire on flank blazed more destructively than ever. The rear of the French column fell back; the leading files, finding themselves unsupported, gave way, but, still careful of their general, bore him back in their arms through the dead and dying, the fire and the smoke. In the confusion he was at length pushed into the marsh. The Austrians were already betwixt him and his own troops, and he must have perished or been taken had not the grenadiers perceived his danger. The cry instantly arose,—"Forward—forward—save the general!" Their love to Buonaparte's person did more than even his commands and example had been able to accomplish. They returned to the charge, and at length pushed the Austrians out of the village; but not till the appearance of a French corps under General Guieux had turned the position, and he had thrown himself in the rear of it. These succours had passed at the ferry of Alborado, and the French re-

Digitized by Google

mained in possession of the long-contested village. It was at the moment a place of the greatest importance; for the possession of it would have enabled Buonaparte, had the Austrians remained in their position, to operate on their communications with the Brenta, interpose between Alvinzi and his reserves, and destroy his park of artillery. But the risk was avoided by the timely caution of the Austrian Field-marshal.

Alvinzi was no sooner aware that a great division of the French army was in his rear, than, without allowing them time for farther operations, he instantly broke up his position on Caldiero, and evacuated these heights by a steady and orderly retreat. Buonaparte had the mortification to see the Austrians effect this manœuvre by crossing a bridge in their rear over the Alpon, and which could he have occupied, as was his purpose, he might have rendered their retreat impossible, or at least disastrous. As matters stood, however, the village of Arcola came to lose its consequence as a position, since, after Alvinzi's retreat, it was no longer in the rear, but in the front of the enemy.

Buonaparte remembered he had enemies on the right as well as the left of the Adige; and that Davidowich might be once more routing Vaubois, while he was too far advanced to afford him assistance. He therefore evacuated Arcola, and the vil-

Digitized by Google

lage of Porcil, situated near it, and retreating to Ronco, re-crossed the river, leaving only two demi-brigades in advance upon the left bank.

The first battle of Arcola, famous for the obstinacy with which it was disputed, and the number of brave officers and men who fell, was thus attended with no decisive result. But it had checked the inclination of Alvinzi to advance on Verona—it had delayed all communication betwixt his army and that of the Tyrol—above all, it had renewed the Austrians' apprehensions of the skill of Buonaparte and the bravery of his troops, and restored to the French soldiery the usual confidence of their national character.

Buonaparte remained stationary at Ronco until next morning at five o'clock, by which time he received intelligence that Davidowich had lain quiet in his former position; that he had no cause to be alarmed for Vaubois' safety, and might therefore operate in security against Alvinzi. This was rendered the more easy, (16th November,) as the Austrian general, not aware of Buonaparte's having halted his army at Ronco, imagined he was on his march to concentrate his forces nearer Mantua, and hastened therefore to overwhelm the rear-guard, whom he expected to find at the ferry. Buonaparte spared them the trouble of a close advance to the Adige. He again crossed to the left side, and again advanced

Digitized by Google

his columns upon the dikes and causeways which traversed the marshes of Arcola. On such ground, where it was impossible to assign to the columns more breadth than the causeways could accommodate, the victorious soldiers of France had great advantage over the recent levies of Austria; for though the latter might be superior in number on the whole, success must in such a case depend on the personal superiority of the front or leading files only. The French, therefore, had the first advantage, and drove back the Austrians upon the village of Arcola; but here, as on the former day, Alvinzi constituted his principal point of defence, and maintained it with the utmost obstinacy.

After having repeatedly failed when attacking in front a post so difficult of approach, Napoleon endeavoured to turn the position by crossing the little river Alpon, near its union with the Adige. He attempted to effect a passage by means of fascines, but unsuccessfully; and the night approached without anything effectual being decided. Both parties drew off, the French to Ronco, where they re-crossed the Adige; the Austrians to a position behind the well-contested village of Arcola.

The battle of the 16th November was thus far favourable to the French, that they had driven back the Austrians, and made many prisoners in the commencement of the day; but they had also lost many

Digitized by Google

men ; and Napoleon, if he had gained ground in the day, was fain to return to his position at night, lest Davidowich, by the defeat of Vaubois, might either relieve Mantua, or move on Verona. The 17th was to be a day more decisive.

The field of battle, and the preliminary manœuvres, were much the same as on the preceding day ; but those of the French were nearly disconcerted by the sinking of one of the boats which constituted their bridge over the Adige. The Austrians instantly advanced on the demi-brigade which had been stationed on the left bank to defend the bridge. But the French, having repaired the damage, advanced in their turn, and compelled the Austrians to retreat upon the marsh. Massena directed his attack on Porcil—General Robert pressed forwards on Arcola. But it was at the point where he wished to cross the Alpon that Buonaparte chiefly desired to attain a decided superiority ; and in order to win it, he added stratagem to audacity. Observing one of his columns repulsed, and retreating along the causeway, he placed the 32d regiment in ambuscade in a thicket of willows which bordered the rivulet, and saluting the pursuing enemy with a close, heavy, and unexpected fire, instantly rushed to close with the bayonet, and attacking the flank of a column of nearly three thousand Croats, forced them into the marsh, where most of them perished.

Digitized by Google

It was now that, after a calculation of the losses sustained by the enemy, Napoleon conceived their numerical superiority so far diminished, and their spirit so much broken, that he need no longer confine his operations to the dikes, but meet his enemy on the firm plain which extended beyond the Alpon. He passed the brook by means of a temporary bridge which had been prepared during night; and the battle raged as fiercely on the dry level, as it had done on the dikes and amongst the marshes.

The Austrians fought with resolution, the rather that their left, though stationed on dry ground, was secured by a marsh which Buonaparte had no means of turning. But though this was the case, Napoleon contrived to gain his point by impressing on the enemy an idea that he had actually accomplished that which he had no means of doing. This he effected by sending a daring officer, with about thirty of the guides, (his own body-guards they may be called,) with four trumpets; and directing these determined cavaliers to charge, and the trumpets to sound, as if a large body of horse had crossed the marsh. Augereau attacked the Austrian left at the same moment; and a fresh body of troops advancing from Legnago, compelled them to retreat, but not to fly.

Alvinzi was now compelled to give way, and commence his retreat on Montebello. He disposed seven

Digitized by Google

thousand men in echellons to cover this movement, which was accomplished without very much loss; but his ranks had been much thinned by the slaughter of the three battles of Arcola. Eight thousand men has been stated as the amount of his losses. The French, who made so many and so sanguinary assaults upon the villages, must also have suffered a great deal. Buonaparte acknowledges this in energetic terms. "Never," he writes to Carnot, "was field of battle so disputed. I have almost no generals remaining—I can assure you that the victory could not have been gained at a cheaper expense. The enemy were numerous, and desperately resolute." The truth is, that Buonaparte's mode of striking terror by these bloody and desperate charges in front upon strong positions, was a blemish in his system. They cost many men, and were not uniformly successful. That of Arcola was found a vain waste of blood, till science was employed instead of main force, when the position was turned by Guieux on the first day; on the third, by the troops who crossed the Alpon.

The tardy conduct of Davidowich, during these three undecided days of slaughterous struggle, is worthy of notice and censure. It would appear that from the 10th November that general had it in his power to attack the division which he had hitherto driven before him, and that he had delayed doing so

Digitized by Google

till the 16th; and on the 18th, just the day after Alvinzi had made his retreat, he approached Verona on the right bank. Had these movements taken place before Alvinzi's defeat, or even during any of the three days preceding, when the French were engaged before Arcola, the consequences must have been very serious. Finding, however, that Alvinzi had retreated, Davidowich followed the same course, and withdrew into the mountains, not much annoyed by the French, who respected the character of his army, which had been repeatedly victorious, and felt the weakness incident to their own late losses.

Another incidental circumstance tends equally strongly to mark the want of concert and communication among the Austrian generals. Wurmser, who had remained quiet in Mantua during all the time when Alvinzi and Davidowich were in the neighbourhood, made a vigorous sally on the 23d November; when his doing so was of little consequence, since he could not be supported.

Thus ended the fourth campaign undertaken for the Austrian possessions in Italy. The consequences were not so decidedly in Buonaparte's favour as those of the three former. Mantua, it is true, had received no relief; and so far the principal object of the Austrians had miscarried. But Wurmser was of a temper to continue the defence till the last moment, and had already provided for a longer defence

Digitized by Google

than the French counted upon, by curtailing the rations of the garrison. The armies of Friuli and the Tyrol had also, since the last campaign, retained possession of Bassano and Trent, and removed the French from the mountains through which access is gained to the Austrian hereditary dominions. Neither had Alvinzi suffered any such heavy defeat as his predecessors Beaulieu or Wurmser; while Davidowich, on the contrary, was uniformly successful, had he known how to avail himself of his victories. Still the Austrians were not likely, till reinforced again, to interrupt Buonaparte's quiet possession of Lombardy.

During two months following the battle of Arcola and the retreat of the Austrians, the war which had been so vigorously maintained in Italy experienced a short suspension, and the attention of Buonaparte was turned towards civil matters—the arrangement of the French interests with the various powers of Italy, and with the congress of Lombardy, as well as the erection of the districts of Bologna, Ferrara, Reggio, and Modena, into what was called the Transpadane Republic. These we shall notice elsewhere, as it is not advisable to interrupt the course of our military annals, until we have recounted the last struggle of the Austrians for the relief of Mantua.

It must be in the first place observed, that, whether from jealousy or from want of means, supplies and



Digitized by Google

recruits were very slowly transmitted from France to their Italian army. About seven thousand men, who were actually sent to join Buonaparte, scarcely repaired the losses which he had sustained in the late bloody campaigns. At the same time the treaty with the Pope being broken off, the supreme Pontiff threatened to march a considerable army towards Lombardy. Buonaparte endeavoured to supply the want of reinforcements by raising a defensive legion among the Lombards, to which he united many Poles. This body was not fit to be brought into line against the Austrians, but was more than sufficient to hold at bay the troops of the Papal See, who have never enjoyed of late years a high degree of military reputation.

Meantime Austria, who seemed to cling to Italy with the tenacity of a dying grasp, again, and now for the fifth time, recruited her armies on the frontier, and placing Alvinzi once more at the head of sixty thousand men, commanded him to resume the offensive against the French in Italy. The spirit of the country had been roused instead of discouraged by the late defeats. The volunteer corps, consisting of persons of respectability and consideration, took the field, for the redemption, if their blood could purchase it, of the national honour. Vienna furnished four battalions, which were presented by the Empress with a banner, that she had wrought for them with her

Digitized by Google

own hands. The Tyrolese also thronged once more to their sovereign's standard, undismayed by a proclamation made by Buonaparte after the retreat from Arcola, and which paid homage, though a painful one, to these brave marksmen. "Whatever Tyrolese," said this atrocious document, "is taken with arms in his hand, shall be put to instant death." Alvinzi sent abroad a counter proclamation, "that for every Tyrolese put to death as threatened, he would hang up a French officer." Buonaparte again replied, "that if the Austrian general should use the retaliation he threatened, he would execute in his turn officer for officer out of his prisoners, commencing with Alvinzi's own nephew, who was in his power." A little calmness on either side brought them to reflect on the cruelty of aggravating the laws of war, which are already too severe; so that the system of military execution was renounced on both sides.

But notwithstanding this display of zeal and loyalty on the part of the Austrian nation, its councils do not appear to have derived wisdom from experience. The losses sustained by Wurmser and by Alvinzi, proceeded in a great measure from the radical error of having divided their forces, and commenced the campaign on a double line of operation, which could not, or at least were not made to, correspond and communicate with each other. Yet they commenced this campaign on the same unhappy principles. One

Digitized by Google

army descending from the Tyrol upon Montebaldo, the other was to march down by the Brenta on the Paduan territory, and then to operate on the lower Adige, the line of which, of course, they were expected to force, for the purpose of relieving Mantua. The Aulic Council ordered that these two armies were to direct their course so as to meet, if possible, upon the beleaguered fortress. Should they succeed in raising the siege, there was little doubt that the French must be driven out of Italy; but even were the scheme only partially successful, still it might allow Wurmser with his cavalry to escape from that besieged city, and retreat into the Romagna, where it was designed that he should, with the assistance of his staff and officers, organize and assume the command of the Papal army. In the meantime, an intelligent agent was sent to communicate if possible with Wurmser.

This man fell into the hands of the besiegers. It was in vain that he swallowed his dispatches, which were inclosed in a ball of wax; means were found to make the stomach render up its trust, and the document which the wax enclosed was found to be a letter, signed by the Emperor's own hand, directing Wurmser to enter into no capitulation, but to hold out as long as possible in expectation of relief, and if compelled to leave Mantua, to accept of no conditions, but to cut his way into the Romagna, and take upon himself the command of the Papal army.

Digitized by Google

Thus Buonaparte became acquainted with the storm which was approaching, and which was not long of breaking.

Alvinzi, who commanded the principal army, advanced from Bassano to Roveredo upon the Adige. Provera, distinguished for his gallant defence of Cossaria during the action of Millesimo,* commanded the divisions which were to act upon the lower Adige. He marched as far as Bevi l'Acqua, while his advanced guard, under Prince Hohenzollern, compelled a body of French to cross to the right bank of the Adige.

Buonaparte, uncertain which of these attacks he was to consider as the main one, concentrated his army at Verona, which had been so important a place during all these campaigns as a central point, from which he might at pleasure march either up the Adige against Alvinzi, or descend the river to resist the attempts of Provera. He trusted that Joubert, whom he had placed in defence of Corona, a little town which had been strongly fortified for the purpose, might be able to make a good temporary defence. He dispatched troops for Joubert's support to Castel Nuovo, but hesitated to direct his principal force in that direction until ten in the evening of 13th January, when he received information that Joubert had been attacked at La Corona by an immense body,

* See p. 104.

Digitized by Google

which he had resisted with difficulty during the day, and was now about to retreat, in order to secure the important eminence at Rivoli, which was the key of his whole position.

Judging from this account that the principal danger occurred on the upper part of the Adige, Buonaparte left only Augereau's division to dispute with Provera the passage of that river on the lower part of its course. He was especially desirous to secure the elevated and commanding position of Rivoli, before the enemy had time to receive his cavalry and cannon, as he hoped to bring on an engagement ere he was united with those important parts of his army. By forced marches Napoleon arrived at Rivoli at two in the morning of the 14th, and from that elevated situation, by the assistance of a clear moonlight, he was able to discover, that the bivouac of the enemy was divided into five distinct and separate bodies, from which he inferred that their attack the next day would be made in the same number of columns.

The distance at which the bivouacs were stationed from the position of Joubert, made it evident to Napoleon that they did not mean to make their attack before ten in the morning, meaning probably to wait for their infantry and artillery. Joubert was at this time in the act of evacuating the position which he only occupied by a rear-guard. Buonaparte commanded him instantly to counter-march and resume possession of the important eminence of Rivoli.



Digitized by Google

A few Croats had already advanced so near the French line as to discover that Joubert's light troops had abandoned the chapel of Saint Marc, of which they took possession. It was retaken by the French, and the struggle to recover and maintain it brought on a severe action, first with the regiment, to which the detachment of Croats belonged, and afterwards with the whole Austrian column which lay nearest to that point, and which was commanded by Ocskay. The latter was repulsed, but the column of Kobler pressed forward to support them, and having gained the summit, attacked two regiments of the French who were stationed there, each protected by a battery of cannon. Notwithstanding this advantage, one of the regiments gave way, and Buonaparte himself galloped to bring up reinforcements. The nearest French were those of Massena's division, which, tired with the preceding night's march, had lain down to take some rest. They started up, however, at the command of Napoleon, and suddenly arriving on the field, in half an hour the column of Kobler was beaten and driven back. That of Liptay advanced in turn; and Quasdonowich, observing that Joubert, in prosecuting his success over the division of Ocskay, had pushed forward and abandoned the chapel of Saint Marc, detached three battalions to ascend the hill, and occupy that post. While the Austrians scaled, on one side, the hill on which the chapel is



Digitized by Google

situated, three battalions of French infantry, who had been countermarched by Joubert to prevent Quasdonowich's purpose, struggled up the steep ascent on another point. The activity of the French brought them first to the summit, and having then the advantage of the ground, it was no difficult matter for them to force the advancing Austrians headlong down the hill which they were endeavouring to climb. Meantime, the French batteries thundered on the broken columns of the enemy—their cavalry made repeated charges, and the whole Austrians who had been engaged fell into inextricable disorder. The columns which had advanced were irretrievably defeated; those who remained were in such a condition, that to attack would have been madness.

Amid this confusion the division of Lusignan, which was the most remote of the Austrian columns, being intrusted with the charge of the artillery and baggage of the army, had, after depositing these according to order, mounted the heights of Rivoli, and assumed a position in rear of the French. Had this column attained the same ground while the engagement continued in front, there can be no doubt that it would have been decisive against Napoleon. Even as it was, their appearance in the rear would have startled troops, however brave, who had less confidence in their general; but those of Buonaparte only exclaimed, "There arrive farther supplies to

Digitized by Google

our market," in full reliance that their commander could not be out-manœuvred. The Austrian division, on the other hand, arriving after the battle was lost, being without artillery or cavalry, and having been obliged to leave a proportion of their numbers to keep a check upon a French brigade, felt that, instead of being in a position to cut off the French, by attacking their rear while their front was engaged, they themselves were cut off by the intervention of the victorious French betwixt them and their defeated army. Lusignan's division was placed under a heavy fire of the artillery in reserve, and was soon obliged to lay down its arms. So critical are the events of war, that a military movement, which, executed at one particular period of time would have insured victory, is not unlikely, from the loss of a brief interval, to occasion only more general calamity.* The Austrians, on this, as on some other occasions, verified too much Napoleon's allegation, that they did not sufficiently consider the value of time in military affairs.

* It is represented in some military accounts, that the division which appeared in the rear of the French belonged to the army of Provera, and had been detached by him on crossing the Adige, as mentioned below. But Napoleon's Saint Helena manuscripts prove the contrary. Provera only crossed on the 14th January, and it was on the morning of the same day that Napoleon had seen the five divisions of Alvinzi, that of Lusignan which afterwards appeared in the rear of his army being one, lying around Joubert's position of Rivoli.

Digitized by Google

The field of Rivoli was one of the most desperate that Buonaparte ever won, and was gained entirely by superior military skill, and not by the overbearing system of mere force of numbers, to which he has been accused of being partial. He himself had his horse repeatedly wounded in the course of the action, and exerted to the utmost his personal influence to bring up the troops into action where their presence was most required.

Alvinzi's error, which was a very gross one, consisted in supposing that no more than Joubert's inconsiderable force was stationed at Rivoli, and in preparing, therefore, to destroy him at his leisure; when his acquaintance with the French celerity of movement ought to have prepared him for the possibility of Buonaparte's night-march, by which, bringing up the chosen strength of his army into the position where the enemy only expected to find a feeble force, he was enabled to resist and defeat a much superior army, brought to the field upon different points, without any just calculation on the means of resistance which were to be opposed; without the necessary assistance of cavalry and artillery; and, above all, without a preconcerted plan of co-operation and mutual support. The excellence of Napoleon's manœuvres was well supported by the devotion of his generals, and the courage of his soldiers. Massena,

Digitized by Google

in particular, so well seconded his general, that afterwards, when Napoleon as Emperor conferred on him the title of duke, he assigned him his designation from the battle of Rivoli.

Almost before this important and decisive victory was absolutely gained, news arrived which required the presence of Buonaparte elsewhere. On the very same day of the battle, Provera, whom we left manœuvring on the Lower Adige, threw a bridge of pontoons over that river, where the French were not prepared to oppose his passage, and pushed forward to Mantua, the relief of which fortress he had by stratagem nearly achieved. A regiment of his cavalry, wearing white cloaks, and resembling in that particular the first regiment of French hussars, presented themselves before the suburb of Saint George, then only covered by a mere line of circumvallation. The barricades were about to be opened without suspicion, when it occurred to a sagacious old French sergeant, who was beyond the walls gathering wood, that the dress of this regiment of white-cloaks was fresher than that of the French corps, called Bertini's, for whom they were mistaken. He communicated his suspicions to a drummer who was near him; they gained the suburb, and cried to arms, and the guns of the defences were opened on the hostile cavalry whom they were about to have admitted in the guise of friends.

Digitized by Google

About the time that this incident took place, Buonaparte himself arrived at Roverbella, within twelve miles of Mantua, to which he had marched with incredible dispatch from the field of battle at Rivoli, leaving to Massena, Murat, and Joubert, the task of completing his victory, by the close pursuit of Alvinzi and his scattered forces.

In the meanwhile, Provera communicated with the garrison of Mantua across the lake, and concerted the measures for its relief with Wurmser. On the 16th of January, being the morning after the battle of Rivoli, and the unsuccessful attempt to surprise the suburb of Saint George, the garrison of Mantua sallied from the place in strength, and took post at the causeway of La Favorita, being the only one which is defended by an inclosed citadel, or independent fortress. Napoleon, returning at the head of his victorious forces, surrounded and attacked with fury the troops of Provera, while the blockading army compelled the garrison, at the bayonet's point, to re-enter the besieged city of Mantua. Provera, who had in vain, though with much decision and gallantry, attempted the relief of Mantua, which his Imperial master had so much at heart, was compelled to lay down his arms with a division of about five thousand men, whom he had still united under his person. The detached corps which he had left to protect his bridge, and other passes in his rear, sustain-

Digitized by Google

ed a similar fate. Thus, one division of the army, which had commenced the campaign of January only on the 7th of that month, were the prisoners of the destined conqueror before ten days had elapsed. The larger army, commanded by Alvinzi, had no better fortune. They were close pursued from the bloody field of Rivoli, and never were permitted to draw breath or to recover their disorder. Large bodies were intercepted and compelled to surrender, a practice now so frequent among the Austrian troops, that it ceased to be shameful.

Nevertheless, one example is so peculiar as to deserve commemoration, as a striking example of the utter consternation and dispersion of the Austrians after this dreadful defeat, and of the confident and audacious promptitude which the French officers derived from their unvaried success. René, a young officer, was in possession of the village called Garda, on the lake of the same name, and, in visiting his advanced posts, he perceived some Austrians approaching, whom he caused his escort to surround and make prisoners. Advancing to the front to reconnoitre, he found himself close to the head of an imperial column of eighteen hundred men, which a turning in the road had concealed till he was within twenty yards of them. "Down with your arms!" said the Austrian commandant; to which René answered with the most ready boldness, "Do *you* lay down your arms! I

Digitized by Google

have destroyed your advanced guard, as witness these prisoners—ground your arms, or no quarter." And the French soldiers catching the hint of their leader, joined in the cry of "Ground your arms." The Austrian officer hesitated, and proposed to enter into capitulation; the Frenchman would admit of no terms but instant and immediate surrender. The dispirited imperialist yielded up his sword, and commanded his soldiers to imitate his example. But the Austrian soldiers began to suspect the truth; they became refractory, and refused to obey their leader, whom René addressed with the utmost apparent composure. "You are an officer, sir, and a man of honour—you know the rules of war—you have surrendered—you are therefore my prisoner, but I rely on your parole—Here, I return your sword—compel your men to submission, otherwise I direct against you the division of six thousand men who are under my command." The Austrian was utterly confounded, betwixt the appeal to his honour and the threat of a charge from six thousand men. He assured René he might rely on his punctilious compliance with the parole he had given him; and speaking in German to his soldiers, persuaded them to lay down their arms, a submission which he had soon afterward the satisfaction to see had been made to one twelfth part of their number.

Amid such extraordinary success, the ground

Digitized by Google

which the French had lost in Italy was speedily resumed. Trent and Bassano were again occupied by the French. They regained all the positions and strongholds which they had possessed on the frontiers of Italy before Alvinzi's first descent, and might perhaps have penetrated deeper into the mountainous frontier of Germany, but for the snow which choked up the passes.

One crowning consequence of the victories of Rivoli and of La Favorita, was the surrender of Mantua itself, that prize which had cost so much blood, and had been defended with such obstinacy.

For several days after the decisive actions which left him without a shadow of hope of relief, Wurmser continued the defence of the place in a sullen yet honourable despair, natural to the feelings of a gallant veteran, who, to the last, hesitated between the desire to resist, and the sense that, his means of subsistence being almost totally expended, resistance was absolutely hopeless. At length he sent his aid-de-camp, Klenau (afterwards a name of celebrity), to the head-quarters of Serrurier, who commanded the blockade, to treat of a surrender. Klenau used the customary language on such occasions. He expatiated on the means which he said Mantua still possessed of holding out, but said, that as Wurmser doubted whether the place could be relieved in time, he would regulate his conduct as to

Digitized by Google

immediate submission, or farther defence, according to the conditions of surrender to which the French generals were willing to admit him.

A French officer of distinction was present, muffled in his cloak, and remaining apart from the two officers, but within hearing of what had passed. When their discussion was finished, this unknown person stepped forward, and taking a pen, wrote down the conditions of surrender to which Wurmser was to be admitted—conditions more honourable and favourable by far than what his extremity could have exacted. "These," said the unknown officer to Klenau, "are the terms which Wurmser may accept at present, and which will be equally tendered to him at any period when he finds farther resistance impossible. We are aware he is too much a man of honour to give up the fortress and city, so long and honourably defended, while the means of resistance remain in his power. If he delays accepting the conditions for a week, for a month, for two months, they shall be equally his when he chooses to accept them. To-morrow I pass the Po, and march upon Rome." Klenau, perceiving that he spoke to the French commander-in-chief, frankly admitted that the garrison could not longer delay surrender, having scarce three days' provisions unconsumed.

This trait of generosity towards a gallant but unfortunate enemy, was highly honourable to Buona-

Digitized by Google

parte. The taste which dictated the stage-effect of the cloak may indeed be questioned; but the real current of his feeling towards the venerable object of his respect, and at the same time compassion, is ascertained otherwise. He wrote to the Directory on the subject, that he had afforded to Wurmser such conditions of surrender as became the generosity of the French nation towards an enemy, who, having lost his army by misfortune, was so little desirous to secure his personal safety, that he threw himself into Mantua, cutting his way through the blockading army; thus voluntarily undertaking the privations of a siege, which his gallantry protracted until almost the last morsel of provisions was exhausted.

But the young victor paid still a more delicate and noble-minded compliment, in declining to be personally present when the veteran Wurmser had the mortification to surrender his sword, with his garrison of twenty thousand men, ten thousand of whom were fit for service. This self-denial did Napoleon as much credit nearly as his victory, and must not be omitted in a narrative, which, often called to stigmatise his ambition and its consequences, should not be the less ready to observe marks of dignified and honourable feeling. The history of this remarkable man more frequently reminds us of the romantic and improbable victories imputed to the heroes of the ro-

Digitized by Google

mantic ages, than of the spirit of chivalry attributed to them; but in this instance Napoleon's conduct towards Wurmser may be justly compared to that of the Black Prince to his royal prisoner, King John of France.

Serrurier, who had conducted the leaguer, had the honour to receive the surrender of Wurmser, after the siege of Mantua had continued for six months, during which the garrison is said by Napoleon to have lost twenty-seven thousand men by disease, and in the various numerous and bloody sallies which took place. This decisive event put an end to the war in Italy. The contest with Austria was hereafter to be waged on the hereditary dominions of that haughty power.

The French, possessed of this grand object of their wishes, were not long in displaying their national characteristics. Their military and prescient sagacity were evinced in employing one of the most celebrated of their engineers, to improve and bring nearly to perfection the defence of a city which may be termed the citadel of Italy. They set afoot, besides, civic feasts and ceremonies, and among others, one in honour of Virgil, who, being the panegyrist of an emperor, was indifferently selected as the presiding genius of an infant republic. Their cupidity was evinced by their artists' exercising their inge-

Digitized by Google

nuity in devising means to cut from the wall and carry off the fresco paintings, by Titian, of the wars between the Gods and the Giants, at all risks of destroying what could never be replaced. Luckily the attempt was found totally unadvisable.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Situation and Views of Buonaparte at this period of the Campaign.—His politic Conduct towards the Italians—Popularity.—Severe terms of Peace proposed to the Pope—rejected.—Napoleon differs from the Directory, and Negotiations are renewed—but again rejected.—The Pope raises his Army to 40,000 Men—Napoleon invades the Papal Territories.—The Papal Troops defeated near Imola—and at Ancona—which is captured—Loretto taken.—Clemency of Buonaparte to the French recusant Clergy.—Peace of Tolentino.—Napoleon's Letter to the Pope.—San Marino.—View of the situation of the different Italian States—Rome—Naples—Tuscany—Venice.*

The eyes of all Europe were now rivetted on Napoleon Buonaparte, whose rise had been so sudden that he was become the terror of empires and the founder of states; the conqueror of the best generals and most disciplined troops in Europe, within a few months after he had been a mere soldier of fortune, seeking rather for subsistence than expecting honourable distinction. Such sudden elevations have occasionally happened amid semi-barbarous

Digitized by Google

nations, where great popular insurrections, desolating and decisive revolutions, are common occurrences, but were hitherto unheard of in civilized Europe. The pre-eminence which he had suddenly obtained had, besides, been subjected to so many trials, as to afford every proof of its permanence. Napoleon stood aloft like a cliff on which successive tempests had expended their rage in vain. The means which raised him were equally competent to make good his greatness. He had infused into the armies which he commanded the firmest reliance on his genius, and the greatest love for his person; so that he could always find agents ready to execute his most difficult commands. He had even inspired them with a portion of his own indefatigable exertion and his commanding intelligence. The maxim which he inculcated upon them when practising those long and severe marches which formed one essential part of his system, was, "I would rather gain victory at the expense of your legs than at the price of your blood." The French, under his training, seemed to become the very men he wanted, and to forget in the excitation of war and the hope of victory, even the feelings of weariness and exhaustion. The following description of the French soldier by Napoleon himself occurs in his dispatches to the Directory during his first campaign in Italy:—

"Were I to name all those who have been distin-



Digitized by Google

guished by acts of personal bravery, I must send the muster-roll of all the grenadiers and carabineers of the advanced-guard. They jest with danger and laugh at death; and if anything can equal their intrepidity, it is the gaiety with which, singing alternately songs of love and patriotism, they accomplish the most severe forced marches. When they arrive at their bivouac, it is not to take their repose, as might be expected, but to tell each his story of the battle of the day, and produce his plan for that of to-morrow; and many of them think with great correctness on military subjects. The other day I was inspecting a demi-brigade, and as it filed past me, a common chasseur approached my horse, and said, 'General, you ought to do so and so.'—'Hold your peace, you rogue!' I replied. He disappeared immediately, nor have I since been able to find him out. But the manœuvre which he recommended was the very same which I had privately resolved to carry into execution."

To command this active, intelligent, and intrepid soldiery, Buonaparte possessed officers entirely worthy of the charge; men young, or at least not advanced in years, to whose ambition the Revolution, and the wars which it had brought on, had opened an unlimited career, and whose genius was inspired by the plans of their leader, and the success which attended them. Buonaparte, who had his eye on every man,



Digitized by Google

never neglected to distribute rewards and punishments, praise and censure, with a liberal hand, or omitted to press for what latterly was rarely if ever denied to him—the promotion of such officers as particularly distinguished themselves. He willingly assumed the task of soothing the feelings of those whose relations had fallen under his banners. His letter of consolation to General Clarke upon the death of young Clarke his nephew, who fell at Arcola, is affecting, as showing that amid all his victories he felt himself the object of reproach and criticism.* His keen sensitiveness to the attacks of the public press attended him through life, and, like the slave in the triumphal car, seemed to remind him that he was still a mortal man.

It should farther be remarked, that Napoleon with-

---

* Letter from Napoleon to General Clark, 25 Brumaire, 5th year of the Republic.—"Your nephew has been slain on the field of battle at Arcola. The young man had been familiar with arms—had led on columns, and would have been one day an excellent officer. He has died with glory in the face of the enemy. He did not suffer for an instant. What man would not envy such a death?—Who is he that would not accept as a favourable condition the choice of thus escaping from the vicissitudes of a contemptible world?—Who is there among us who has not a hundred times regretted that he has not been thus withdrawn from the powerful effects of calumny, of envy, and of all the odious passions which seem the almost exclusive directors of the conduct of mankind?"—This letter, remarkable in many respects, will remind the English reader of Cato's exclamation over the body of his son—

"Who would not be this youth?"



Digitized by Google

stood, instantly and boldly, all the numerous attempts made by commissaries, and that description of persons, to encroach upon the fund destined for the use of the army. Much of his public, and more of his private correspondence, is filled with complaints against these agents, although he must have known that, in attacking them, he disobliged men of highest influence, who had frequently some secret interest in their wealth. But his military fame made his services indispensable, and permitted him to set at defiance the enmity of such persons, who are generally as timid as they are sordid. Buonaparte's former patron, Barras, was supposed to be accessible to this species of corruption.

Towards the general officers there took place a gradual change of deportment, as the commander-in-chief began to feel gradually, more and more, the increasing sense of his own personal importance. We have been informed by an officer of the highest rank, that, during the earlier campaigns, Napoleon used to rejoice with, and embrace them as associates, nearly on the same footing, engaged in the same tasks. After a period, his language and carriage became those of a frank soldier, who, sensible of the merit of his subordinate assistants, yet makes them sensible, by his manner, that he is their commander-in-chief. When his infant fortunes began to come of age, his deportment to his generals was tinctured

Digitized by Google

with that lofty courtesy which princes use towards their subjects, and which plainly intimated, that he held them as subjects in the war, not as brethren.*

Napoleon's conduct towards the Italians individually was, in most instances, in the highest degree prudent and political, while, at the same time, it coincided, as true policy usually does, with the rules of justice and moderation, and served in a great measure to counterbalance the odium which he incurred by despoiling Italy of the works of art, and even by his infringements on the religious system of the Catholics.

On the latter subject, the general became particularly cautious, and his dislike or contempt of the Church of Rome was no longer shown in that gross species of satire which he had at first given loose to. On the contrary, it was veiled under philosophical indifference; and, while relieving the clergy of their worldly possessions, Napoleon took care to avoid the error of the Jacobins; never proposing their tenets as an object of persecution, but protecting their persons, and declaring himself a decided friend to general toleration on all points of conscience.

---

* Count Las Casas mentions an incident of the same kind. An officer, who had known Buonaparte familiarly before Toulon, was, when he obtained the command of the Army of Italy, about to rush into the arms of his old comrade. But the look and manner of the general made it evident there was an end to their intimacy, and that the intercourse between them had changed its character with his friend's promotion.

Digitized by Google

In point of politics, as well as religion, the opinions of Buonaparte appeared to have experienced a great change. It may be doubted, indeed, if he ever in his heart adopted those of the outrageous Jacobins; but he must doubtless have professed them, whether sincerely or not, when he first obtained promotion under the influence of the younger Robespierre, Salicetti, and Barras, who, afterwards a Thermidorien, was a Sans Culotte during the siege of Toulon.* Buonaparte's clear and sound good sense speedily made him sensible, that such a violence on the established rules of reason and morality, as an attempt to make the brutal force of the multitude the forcible controller of those possessed of the wisdom, property, and education of a country, is too unnatural to remain long, or to become the basis of a well-regulated state. Being at present a Re-

* Even when before Toulon, he was not held by clear-sighted persons to be a very orthodox Jacobin. General Cartaux, the stupid Sans Culotte under whom he first served, was talking of the young commandant of artillery with applause, when his wife, who was somewhat first in command at home, advised him not to reckon too much on that young man, "who had too much sense to be long a Sans Culotte."—"Sense? Female-citizen Cartaux," said her offended husband, "do you take us for fools?"—"By no means," answered the lady; "but his sense is not of the same kind with yours."—Las Casas' *Journal*, vol. I. p. 144. *Colburn's Translation.*—In the same work, we read an admission of Napoleon, that his brother Lucien was a much more violent Jacobin than himself, and that some papers published as his, with the signature, Brutus Buonaparte, ought in fact to be ascribed to Lucien.

Digitized by Google

publican of the Thermidorien party, Buonaparte, even though he made use of the established phrases Liberty and Equality, acknowledged no dignity superior than Citizen, and *Thee'd* and *Thou'd* whomsoever he addressed, was permitted to mix many grains of liberality with those democratic forms. Indeed, the republican creed of the day began to resemble the leathern apron of the brazier who founded a dynasty in the East—his descendants continued to display it as their banner, but enriched it so much with gems and embroidery, that there was little of the original stuff to be discovered.

Jacobinism, for example, being founded on the principle of assimilating the national character to the gross ignorance of the lower classes, was the natural enemy of the fine arts and of literature, whose productions the Sans Culottes could not comprehend, and which they destroyed for the same enlightened reasons that Jack Cade's followers hanged the clerk of Chatham, with his pen and inkhorn about his neck. Buonaparte, on the contrary, saw that knowledge, of whatsoever kind, was power; and therefore he distinguished himself honourably amidst his victories, by seeking the conversation of men distinguished for literary attainments, and displaying an interest in the antiquities and curiosities of the towns which he visited, that could not but seem flattering to the inhabitants. In a letter addressed publicly to Oriani,

Digitized by Google

a celebrated astronomer, he assures him that all men of genius, all who had distinguished themselves in the republic of letters, were to be accounted natives of France, whatever might be the actual place of their birth. "Hitherto," he said, "the learned in Italy did not enjoy the consideration to which they were entitled—they lived retired in their laboratories and libraries, too happy if they could escape the notice, and consequently the persecution, of kings and priests. It is now no longer thus—there is no longer religious inquisition, nor despotic power. Thought is free in Italy. I invite the literary and scientific persons to consult together, and propose to me their ideas on the subject of giving new vigour and life to the fine arts and sciences. All who desire to visit France will be received with distinction by the government. The people of France have more pride in enrolling among their citizens a skilful mathematician, a painter of reputation, a distinguished man in any class of literature, than in adding to their territories a large and wealthy city. I request, sir, that you will make my sentiments known to the most distinguished literary persons in the state of Milan." To the municipality of Pavia he wrote, desiring that the professors of their celebrated university should resume their course of instruction under the security of his protection, and inviting them to point out to him

Digitized by Google

such measures as might occur, for giving a more brilliant existence to their ancient seminaries.

The interest which he thus took in the literature and literary institutions of Italy, was shown by admitting men of science or letters freely to his person. Their communication was the more flattering, that being himself of Italian descent, and familiar with the beautiful language of the country from his infancy, his conversation with men of literary eminence was easily conducted. It may be mentioned episodically, that Napoleon found a remnant of his family in Italy, in the person of the Abbé Gregorio Buonaparte, the only remaining branch of that Florentine family, of whom the Corsican line were cadets. He resided at San Miniato, of which he was canon, and was an old man, and said to be wealthy. The relationship was eagerly acknowledged, and the general, with his whole staff, dined with the Canon Gregorio. The whole mind of the old priest was wrapt up in a project of obtaining the honours of regular canonization for one of the family called Bonaventura, who had been a capuchin in the 17th century, and was said to have died in the odour of sanctity, though his right to divine honours had never been acknowledged. It must have been ludicrous enough to have heard the old man insist upon a topic so uninteresting to Napoleon, and press the French republican general to use his interest with the Pope.

Digitized by Google

There can be little doubt that the Holy Father, to have escaped other demands, would have canonized a whole French regiment of Carmagnols, and ranked them with the old militia of the calendar, the Theban Legion. But Napoleon was sensible that any request on such a subject coming from him would be only ludicrous.*

The progress which Buonaparte made personally in the favour of the Italians, was, doubtless, a great assistance to the propagation of the new doctrines which were connected with the French Revolution, and was much aided by the trust which he seemed desirous to repose in the natives of the country. He retained, no doubt, in his own hands, the ultimate decision of everything of consequence; but in matters of ordinary importance, he permitted and encouraged the Italians to act for themselves, in a manner they had not been accustomed to under their German masters. The internal government of their towns was intrusted to provisional govern-

* Las Casas says, that afterwards the Pope himself touched on the same topic, and was disposed to see the immediate guidance and protection afforded by the consanguinean Saint Bonaventura in the great deeds wrought by his relation. It was said of the church-endowing saint, David King of Scotland, that he was a sore saint for the Crown; certainly Saint Bonaventura must have been a sore saint for the Papal See. The old abbé left Napoleon his fortune, which he conferred on some public institution.

Digitized by Google

ors, chosen without respect to rank, and the maintenance of police was committed to the armed burghers, or national guards. Conscious of the importance annexed to these privileges, they already became impatient for national liberty. Napoleon could hardly rein back the intense ardour of the large party among the Lombards who desired an immediate declaration of independence, and he had no other expedient left than to amuse them with procrastinating excuses, which enhanced their desire of such an event, while they delayed its gratification. Other towns of Italy,—for it was among the citizens of the towns that these sentiments were chiefly cultivated,—began to evince the same wish to new-model their governments on the revolutionary system; and this ardour was chiefly shown on the southern side of the Po.

It must be remembered, that Napoleon had engaged in treaty with the Duke of Modena, and had agreed to guarantee his principality, on payment of immense contributions in money and stores, besides the surrender of the most valuable treasures of his museum. In consequence, the Duke of Modena was permitted to govern his states by a regency, he himself fixing his residence in Venice. But his two principal towns, Reggio and Modena, especially the former, became desirous of shaking off his government. An-



Digitized by Google

ticipating in doing so the approbation of the French general and government, the citizens of Reggio rose in insurrection, expelled from their town a body of the ducal troops, and planted the tree of liberty, resolved, as they said, to constitute themselves a free state, under the protection of the French Republic. The Ducal regency, with a view of protecting Modena from a similar attempt, mounted cannon on their ramparts, and took other defensive measures.

Buonaparte affected to consider these preparations as designed against the French; and marching a body of troops, took possession of the city without resistance, deprived the Duke of all the advantages which he had purchased by the mediation of the celebrated Saint Jerome, and declared the town under protection of France. Bologna and Ferrara, legations belonging to the Papal See, had been already occupied by French troops, and placed under the management of a committee of their citizens. They were now encouraged to coalesce with Reggio and Modena. A congress of an hundred delegates from the four districts was summoned, to effect the formation of a government which should extend over them all. The Congress met accordingly, engaged their constituents in a perpetual union, under title of the Cispadane Republic, from their situation on the right of the river Po; thus assuming the character

Digitized by Google

of independence, while in fact they remained under the authority of Buonaparte, like clay in the hands of the potter, who may ultimately model it into any shape he has a mind. In the meantime, he was careful to remind them, that the liberty which it was desirable to establish, ought to be consistent with due subjection to the laws. "Never forget," he said, in reply to their address announcing their new form of government, "that laws are mere nullities without the force necessary to support them. Attend to your military organization, which you have the means of placing on a respectable footing—you will be more fortunate than the people of France, for you will arrive at liberty without passing through the ordeal of revolution."

This was not the language of a Jacobin; and it fortifies the belief, that even now, while adhering ostensibly to the Republican system, Buonaparte anticipated considerable changes in that of France.

Meanwhile the Lombards became impatient at seeing their neighbours outstrip them in the path of revolution, and of nominal independence. The municipality of Milan proceeded to destroy all titles of honour, as a badge of feudal dependence, and became so impatient, that Buonaparte was obliged to pacify them by a solemn assurance that they should speedily enjoy the benefits of a republican constitu-

Digitized by Google

tion; and to tranquillize their irritation, placed them under the government of a provisional council, selected from all classes, labourers included.

This measure made it manifest, that the motives which had induced the delay of the French government to recognize the independence (as they termed it) of Lombardy, were now of less force; and in a short time, the provisional council of Milan, after some modest doubts on their own powers, revolutionized their country, and assumed the title of the Transpadane Republic, which they afterwards laid aside, when, on their union with the Cispadane, both were united under the name of the Cisalpine Commonwealth. This decisive step was adopted 3d January 1797. Decrees of a popular character had preceded the declaration of independence, but an air of moderation was observed in the revolution itself. The nobles, deprived of their feudal rights and titular dignities, were subjected to no incapacities; the reformation of the church was touched upon gently, and without indicating any design of its destruction. In these particulars, the Italian commonwealths stopped short of their Gallic prototype.

If Buonaparte may be justly charged with want of faith, in destroying the authority of the Duke of Modena, after having accepted of a price for granting him peace and protection, we cannot object to

Digitized by Google

him the same charge for acceding to the Transpadane Republic, in so far as it detached the legations of Ferrara and Bologna from the Roman See. These had been in a great measure reserved for the disposal of the French, as circumstances should dictate, when a final treaty should take place betwixt the Republic and the Sovereign Pontiff. But many circumstances had retarded this pacification, and seemed at length likely to break it off without hope of renewal.

If Buonaparte is correct in his statement, which we see no reason to doubt, the delay of a pacification with the Roman See was chiefly the fault of the Directory, whose avaricious and engrossing spirit was at this period its most distinguishing characteristic. An armistice, purchased by treasure, by contributions, by pictures and statues, and by the cession of the two legations of Bologna and Ferrara, having been mediated for his Holiness by the Spanish ambassador Azara, the Pope sent two plenipotentiaries to Paris to treat of a definitive peace. But the conditions proposed were so severe, that however desperate his condition, the Pope found them totally inadmissible. His Holiness was required to pay a large contribution in grain for ten years, a regular tribute of six millions of Roman crowns for six years, to cede to France in perpetuity the ports of Ancona and

Digitized by Google

Civita Vecchia, and to declare the independence of Ferrara, Bologna, and Ravenna. To add insult to oppression, the total cession of the Clementine Museum was required, and it was stipulated that France should have under management of her minister at Rome, a separate tribunal for judging her subjects, and a separate theatre for their amusement. Lastly, the secular sovereignty of the dominions of the church was to be executed by a senate and a popular body.

These demands might have been complied with, although they went the length of entirely stripping his Holiness of the character of a secular prince. But there were others made on him, in capacity of head of the church, which he could not grant, if he meant in future to lay claim to any authority under that once venerable title. The Sovereign Pontiff was required to recall all the briefs which he had issued against France since 1789, to sanction the constitutional oath which released the French clergy from the dominion of the Holy See, and to ratify the confiscation of the church-lands. Treasures might be expended, secular dignities resigned, and provinces ceded; but it was clear that the Sovereign Pontiff could not do what was expressly contrary to the doctrines of the church which he represented. There were but few clergymen in France

Digitized by Google

who had hesitated to prove their devotion to the church of Rome, by submitting to expulsion, rather than take the constitutional oath. It was now for the Head of the Church to show in his own person a similar disinterested devotion to her interests.

Accordingly, the College of Cardinals having rejected the proposals of France, as containing articles contrary to conscience, the Pope declared his determination to abide by the utmost extremity, rather than accede to conditions destructive, degrading, and, in his opinion, impious. The Directory instantly determined on the total ruin of the Pope, and of his power, both spiritual and temporal.

Napoleon dissented from the opinion of the government. In point of moral effect, a reconciliation with the Pope would have been of great advantage to France, and have tended to reunite her with other Catholic nations, and diminish the horror with which she was regarded as sacrilegious and atheistical. Even the army of the Holy See was not altogether to be despised, in case of any reverse taking place in the war with the Austrians. Under these considerations, he prevailed on the Directory to renew the negotiations at Florence. But the French commissioners, having presented as preliminaries sixty indispensable conditions, containing the same articles which had been already rejected, as contrary to



Digitized by Google

the conscience of the Pontiff, the conferences broke up; and the Pope, in despair, resolved to make common cause with the House of Austria, and have recourse to the secular force, which the Roman See had disused for so many years.

It was a case of dire necessity; but the arming of the Pope's government, whose military force had been long the subject of ridicule,* against the victorious conqueror of five Austrian armies, reminds us of Priam, when, in extremity of years and despair, he buckled on his rusty armour, to oppose age and decrepitude to the youthful strength of Pyrrhus.† Yet the measures of Sextus indicated considerable energy. He brought back to Rome an instalment of sixteen millions of stipulated tribute, which was on the road to Buonaparte's military chest—took every measure to increase his army, and by the voluntary exertions of the noble families of Rome, he actually raised it to forty thousand men, and placed at its head the same general Colli, who had commanded with credit the troops of Sardinia during the campaign on the Alps. The utmost pains were taken by the

* Voltaire, in some of his romances, terms the Pope an old gentleman having a guard of one hundred men, who mount guard with umbrellas, and who make war on nobody.

† Arma diu senior desueta, trementibus ævo
Circumdat nequicquam humeris, et inutile ferrum
Cingitur ——— *Æneid, Lib. II.*



Digitized by Google

clergy, both regular and secular, to give the expected war the character of a crusade, and to excite the fierce spirit of those peasantry who inhabit the Appenines, and were doubly disposed to be hostile to the French, as foreigners and as heretics. The Pope endeavoured also to form a close alliance with the King of the two Sicilies, who promised in secret to cover Rome with an army of thirty thousand men. Little reliance was indeed to be placed in the good faith of the court of Naples; but the Pope was compared, by the French envoy, to a man who, in the act of falling, would grasp for support at a hook of red-hot iron.

While the Court of Rome showed this hostile disposition, Napoleon reproached the French government for having broke off the negotiation, which they ought to have protracted till the event of Alvinzi's march into Italy was known; at all events, until their general had obtained possession of the sixteen millions, so much wanted to pay his forces. In reply to his remonstrances, he received permission to renew the negotiations upon modified terms. But the Pope had gone too far to recede. Even the French victory of Arcola, and the instant threats of Buonaparte to march against him at the head of a flying column, were unable to move his resolution. "Let the French general march upon Rome," said the Papal minister; "the Pope, if necessary, will quit his capital. The farther the French are drawn



Digitized by Google

from the Adige, the nearer they are to their ultimate destruction." Napoleon was sensible, on receiving a hostile answer, that the Pope still relied on the last preparations which were made for the relief of Mantua, and it was not safe to attempt his chastisement until Alvinzi and Provera should be disposed of. But the decisive battles of Rivoli and La Favorita having ruined these armies, Napoleon was at leisure to execute his purpose of crushing the power, such as it was, of the Holy See. For this purpose he dispatched Victor with a French division of four thousand men, and an Italian army of nearly the same force, supplied by Lombardy and by the Transpadane republic, to invade the territories of the Church on the eastern side of Italy, by the route of Imola.

Meantime, the utmost exertions had been made by the clergy of Romagna, to raise the peasants in a mass, and a great many obeyed the sound of the tocsin. But an insurrectionary force is more calculated to embarrass the movements of a regular army, by alarms on their flanks and rear, by cutting off their communications, and destroying their supplies, defending passes, and skirmishing in advantageous positions, than by opposing them in the open field. The Papal army, consisting of about seven or eight thousand men, were encamped on the river Senio, which runs on the southward of the town of Imola, to dispute the passage. The banks were defended with

Digitized by Google

cannon; but the river being unusually low, the French crossed about a league and a half higher up than the position of the Roman army, which, taken in the rear, fled in every direction, after a short resistance. A few hundreds were killed, among whom were several monks, who, holding the crucifix in their hand, had placed themselves in the ranks to encourage the soldiers. Faenza held out, and was taken by storm; but the soldiers were withheld from pillage by the generosity, or prudence of Napoleon, and he dismissed the prisoners of war to carry into the interior of the country the news of their own defeat, of the irresistible superiority of the French army, and of the clemency of their general.

Next day, three thousand of the Papal troops, occupying an advantageous position in front of Ancona, and commanded by Colli, were made prisoners without firing a shot; and Ancona was taken after slight resistance, though a place of some strength. A curious piece of priestcraft had been played off in this town, to encourage the people to resistance. A miraculous image was seen to shed tears, and the French artists could not discover the mode in which the trick was managed until the image was brought to headquarters, when a glass shrine, by which the illusion was managed, was removed. The Madonna was sent back to the church which owned her, but apparently had become reconciled to the foreign visitors, and

Digitized by Google

dried her tears in consequence of her interview with Buonaparte.

On the 10th of February, the French, moving with great celerity, entered Loretto, where the celebrated Santa Casa is the subject of the Catholic's devotional triumph, or secret scorn, according as his faith or his doubts predominate. The wealth which this celebrated shrine is once supposed to have possessed by gifts of the faithful, had been removed by Colli—if, indeed, it had not been transported to Rome long before the period of which we treat; yet, precious metal and gems to the amount of a million of livres, fell into the possession of the French, whose capture was also enriched by the holy image of Our Lady of Loretto, with the sacred porringer, and a bedgown of dark-coloured camlet, warranted to have belonged to the Blessed Virgin. The image, said to have been of celestial workmanship, was sent to Paris, but was restored to the Pope in 1802. We are not informed that any of the treasures were given back along with the Madonna, to whom they had been devoted.

As the French army advanced upon the Roman territory, there was a menace of the interference of the King of Naples, worthy to be mentioned, both as expressing the character of that court, and showing Napoleon's readiness in anticipating and defeating the arts of indirect diplomacy.

Digitized by Google

The Prince of Belmonte-Pignatelli, who attended Buonaparte's head-quarters, in the capacity perhaps of an observer, as much as of ambassador for Naples, came to the French general in secrecy, to show him, under strict confidence, a letter of the Queen of the Two Sicilies, proposing to march an army of thirty thousand men towards Rome. "Your confidence shall be repaid," said Buonaparte, who at once saw through the spirit of the communication—"You shall know what I have long since settled to do in case of such an event taking place." He called for the port-folio containing the papers respecting Naples, and presented to the disconcerted Prince the copy of a dispatch written in November preceding, which contained this passage:—"The approach of Alvinzi would not prevent my sending six thousand men to chastise the court of Rome; but as the Neapolitan army might march to their assistance, I will postpone this movement till after the surrender of Mantua; in which case, if the King of Naples should interfere, I shall be able to spare twenty-five thousand men to march against his capital, and drive him over to Sicily." Prince Pignatelli was quite satisfied with the result of this mutual confidence, and there was no more said of Neapolitan armed interference.

From Ancona the division commanded by Victor turned westward to Foligno, to unite itself with another column of French which penetrated into the

Digitized by Google

territories of the church by Perugia, which they easily accomplished. Resistance seemed now unavailing. The Pope in vain solicited his subjects to rise against the second Alaric, who was approaching the Holy City. They remained deaf to his exhortations, though made in the names of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Apostles Peter and Paul, who had of old been the visible protectors of the metropolis of the Christian world in a similar emergency. All was dismay and confusion in the patrimony of Saint Peter's, which was now the sole territory remaining in possession of his representative.

But there was an unhappy class of persons, who had found shelter in Rome, rather than disown whose allegiance they had left their homes, and resigned their means of living. These were the recusant French clergy, who had refused to take the constitutional oath, and who now, recollecting the scenes which they witnessed in France, expected little else, than that, on the approach of the Republican troops, they would, like the Israelitish captain, be slain between the horns of the very altar at which they had taken refuge. It is said that one of their number, frantic at thoughts of the fate which he supposed awaited them, presented himself to Buonaparte, announced his name and condition, and prayed to be led to instant death. Napoleon took the opportunity to show once more that he was acting on principles different

Digitized by Google

from the brutal and persecuting spirit of Jacobinism. He issued a proclamation, in which, premising that the recusant priests, though banished from the French territory, were not prohibited from residing in countries which might be conquered by the French arms, he declares himself satisfied with their conduct. The proclamation goes on to prohibit, under the most severe penalty, the French soldiery, and all other persons, from doing any injury to these unfortunate exiles. The convents are directed to afford them lodging, nourishment, and fifteen French livres (twelve shillings and sixpence British) monthly, to each individual, for which the priest was to compensate by saying masses *ad valorem*;—thus assigning the Italian convents payment for their hospitality, in the same coin with which they themselves requited the laity.

Perhaps this liberality might have some weight with the Pope in inducing him to throw himself upon the mercy of France, as had been recommended to him by Buonaparte in a confidential communication through the superior of the monastic order of Camalduli, and more openly in a letter addressed to Cardinal Mattei. The King of Naples made no movement to his assistance. In fine, after hesitating what course to take, and having had at one time his equipage ready harnessed to leave Rome and fly to Naples, the Pontiff judged resistance and flight alike



Digitized by Google

unavailing, and chose the humiliating alternative of entire submission to the will of the conqueror.

It was the object of the Directory entirely to destroy the secular authority of the Pope, and to deprive him of all his temporalities. But Buonaparte foresaw, that whether the Roman territories were united with the new Cispadane Republic, or formed into a separate state, it would alike bring on prematurely a renewal of the war with Naples, ere the north of Italy was yet sufficiently secure to admit the marching a French force into the southern extremities of the Italian peninsula, exposed to descents of the English, and insurrections in the rear. These Napoleon foresaw would be the more dangerous and difficult to subdue, that, though he might strip the Pope of his temporalities, he could not deprive him of the supremacy assigned him in spiritual matters by each Catholic; which, on the contrary, was, according to the progress of human feeling, likely to be the more widely felt and recognised in favour of a wanderer and a sufferer for what would be accounted conscience-sake, than of one who, submitting to circumstances, retained as much of the goods of this world as the clemency of his conqueror would permit.

Influenced by these considerations, Buonaparte admitted the Pope to a treaty, which terminated in the peace of Tolentino, by which Sextus purchased such a political existence as was left to him, at the

Digitized by Google

highest rate which he had the least chance of discharging. Napoleon mentions, as a curious instance of the crafty and unscrupulous character of the Neapolitans, that the same Pignatelli, whom we have already commemorated, attached himself closely to the plenipotentiaries during the whole treaty of Tolentino; and in his ardour to discover whether there existed any secret article betwixt the Pope and Buonaparte which might compromise the interests of his master, was repeatedly discovered listening at the door of the apartment in which the discussions were carried on.

The articles which the Pope was obliged to accept at Tolentino, included the cession of Avignon and its territories, the appropriation of which, by France, had never yet been recognized; the resigning the legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna; the occupation of Ancona, the only port excepting Venice which Italy has in the Adriatic; the payment of 80 millions of livres, in specie or in valuable effects; the complete execution of the article in the armistice of Bologna respecting the delivery of paintings, manuscripts, and objects of art; and several other stipulations of similar severity.

Buonaparte informs us, that it was a principal object in this treaty to compel the abolition of the Inquisition, from which he had only departed in consequence of receiving information, that it had

Digitized by Google

ceased to be used as a religious tribunal, and subsisted only as a court of police. The conscience of the Pope seemed also so tenderly affected by the proposal, that he thought it safe to desist from it.

The same dispatch, in which Buonaparte informs the Directory, that his committee of artist collectors "had made a good harvest of paintings in the Papal dominions, and which, with the objects of art ceded by the Pope, included almost all that was curious and valuable, excepting some few objects at Turin and Naples," conveyed to them a document of a very different kind. This was a respectful and almost reverential letter from Napoleon to the Pope, recommending to his Holiness to distrust such persons as might excite him to doubt the good intentions of France, assuring him that he would always find the Republic most sincere and faithful, and expressing in his own name the perfect esteem and veneration which he entertained for the person of his Holiness, and the extreme desire which he had to afford him proofs to that effect.

This letter furnished much amusement at the time, and seemed far less to intimate the sentiments of a Sans Culotte general, than those of a civilized highwayman of the old school of Macheath, who never dismissed the travellers whom he had plundered, without his sincere good wishes for the happy prosecution of their journey.

Digitized by Google

A more pleasing view of Buonaparte's character was exhibited about this time, in his conduct towards the little interesting Republic of San Marino. That state, which only acknowledges the Pope as a protector, not as a sovereign, had maintained for very many years an independence, which conquerors had spared either in contempt or in respect. It consists of a single mountain and a single town, and boasts about seven thousand inhabitants, governed by their own laws. Citizen Monge, the chief of the committee of collecting-artists, was sent deputy to San Marino to knit the bands of amity between the two Republics, —which might well resemble a union between Lilliput and Brobdignag. There were no pictures in the little Republic, or they might have been a temptation to the citizen collector. The people of San Marino conducted themselves with much sagacity; and although more complimentary to Buonaparte than Diogenes to Alexander the Great, when he came to visit the philosopher in his tub, they showed the same judgment in eschewing too much courtesy. They respectfully declined an accession of territory, which could but have involved them in subsequent quarrels with the sovereign from whom it was to be wrested, and only accepted as an honorary gift the present of four field-pieces, being a train of artillery upon the scale of their military force, and of which, it is to be



Digitized by Google

hoped, the Captain Regents of the little contented state will never have any occasion to make use.

Rome might, for the present at least, be considered as completely subjugated. Naples was at peace, if the signature of a treaty can create peace. At any rate, so distant from Rome, and so controlled by the defeat of the Papal arms—by the fear that the English fleet might be driven from the Mediterranean—and by their distance from the scene of action—the King of the Two Sicilies, or rather his wife, the high-spirited daughter of Maria Theresa, dared not offer the least interference with the purposes of the French general. Tuscany had apparently consented to owe her political existence to any degree of clemency or contempt which Buonaparte might extend to her; and, entertaining hopes of some convention betwixt the French and English, by which the Grand Duke's port of Leghorn might be restored to him, remained passive as the dead. The republic of Venice alone, feeling still the stimulus arising from her ancient importance, and yet painfully conscious of her present want of power, strained every exertion to place herself in a respectable attitude. That city of lofty remembrances, the Tyre of the middle ages, whose traders were princes, and her merchants the honourable of the earth, fallen as she was from her former greatness, still presented some appearance of vigour. Her oli-

Digitized by Google

garchical government, so long known and so dreaded, for jealous precautions, political sagacity, the impenetrability of their plans, and the inflexibility of their rigour, still preserved the attitude of independence, and endeavoured, by raising additional regiments of Sclavonians, disciplining their peasantry, who were of a very martial character, and forming military magazines of considerable extent, to maintain such an aspect, as might make their friendship to be courted, and their enmity to be feared. It was already evident that the Austrians, notwithstanding all their recent defeats, were again about to make head on their Italo-German frontier; and France, in opposing them, could not be indifferent to the neutrality of Venice, upon whose territories, to all appearance, Buonaparte must have rested the flank of his operations, in case of his advancing towards Friuli. So circumstanced, and when it was recollected that the mistress of the Adriatic had still fifty thousand men at her command, and those of a fierce and courageous description, chiefly consisting of Sclavonians, Venice, even yet, was an enemy not to be lightly provoked. But the inhabitants were not unanimous, especially those of the Terra Firma, or mainland, who, not being enrolled in the golden book of the insular nobility of Venice, were discontented, and availed themselves of the encouragement and assist-

Digitized by Google

ance of the new-created republics on the Po to throw off their allegiance. Brescia and Bergamo, in particular, were clamorous for independence.

Napoleon saw, in this state of dissension, the means of playing an adroit game; and while, on the one hand, he endeavoured to restrain, till a more favourable opportunity, the ardour of the patriots, he attempted, on the other, to convince the Senate, that they had no safe policy but in embracing at once the alliance of France, offensive and defensive, and joining their forces to those of the army with which he was about to move against the Austrians. He offered, on these conditions, to guarantee the possessions of the republic, even without exacting any modification of their oligarchical constitution. But Venice declared for an impartial neutrality. It had been, they said, their ancient and sage policy, nor would they now depart from it. "Remain then neuter," said Napoleon; "I consent to it. I march upon Vienna, yet will leave enough of French troops in Italy to control your republic.—But dismiss these new levies; and remark, that if, while I am in Germany, my communications shall be interrupted, my detachments cut off, or my convoys intercepted in the Venetian territory, the date of your republic is terminated. She will have brought on herself annihilation."

Digitized by Google

Lest these threats should be forgotten while he was at a distance, he took the best precautions in his power, by garrisoning advantageous points on the line of the Adige; and trusting partly to this defence, partly to the insurgents of Bergamo and Brescia, who, for their own sakes, would oppose any invasion of the mainland by their Venetian masters, whose yoke they had cast aside, Napoleon again unfurled his banners, and marched to new triumphs over yet untried opponents.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER IX.

*Archduke Charles—Compared with Napoleon—Fettered by the Aulic Council.—Napoleon, by a stratagem, passes the Tagliamento, and compels the Archduke to retreat.—Gradisca carried by storm.—Chiusa-Veneta taken by Massena, with the loss of* 5000 *Austrians, Baggage, Cannon, &c.—The Sea-ports of Triest and Fiume occupied by the French.—Venice breaks the Neutrality, and commences Hostilities by a massacre of* 100 *Frenchmen at Verona.—Terrified on learning that an Armistice had taken place betwixt France and Austria—Circumstances which led to this.—The Archduke retreats by hasty marches on Vienna—His prospects of success in defending it—The Government and People irresolute, and the Treaty of Leoben signed—Venice now makes the most humiliating submissions.—Napoleon's Speech to the Venetian Envoys—He declares War against Venice, and evades obeying the orders of the Directory to spare it.—The Great Council, on* 31*st May, concede everything to Buonaparte, and disperse in terror.—Terms granted by the French General.*

THE victories of the Archduke Charles of Austria on the Rhine, and his high credit with the soldiers, seemed to point him out as the commander falling most naturally to be employed against the young general of the French republic, who, like a gifted hero of romance, had borne down successively all opponents who had presented themselves in the field.



Digitized by Google

The opinions of Europe were suspended concerning the probable issue of the contest. Both generals were young, ambitious, enthusiastic in the military profession, and warmly beloved by their soldiers. The exploits of both had filled the trumpet of Fame; and although Buonaparte's success had been less uninterrupted, yet it could not be denied, that if the Archduke's plans were not equally brilliant and original with those of his great adversary, they were just and sound, and had been attended repeatedly with great results, and by the defeat of such men as Moreau and Jourdan. But there were two particulars in which the Austrian Prince fell far short of Napoleon,—first, in that ready, decided, and vigorous confidence, which seizes the favourable instant for the execution of plans resolved upon,—and secondly, in having the disadvantage to be subjected, notwithstanding his high rank, to the interference of the Aulic Council; who, sitting at Vienna, and ignorant of the changes and vicissitudes of the campaign, were yet, by the ancient and jealous laws of the Austrian empire, entitled to control his opinion, and prescribe beforehand the motions of the armies, while the generals intrusted with the execution of their schemes, had often no choice left but that of adherence to their instructions, however emerging circumstances might require a deviation.



Digitized by Google

But although the encounter betwixt these two distinguished young generals be highly interesting, our space will not permit us to detail the campaigns of Austria at the same length as those of Italy. The latter formed the commencement of Buonaparte's military career, and at no subsequent period of his life did he achieve the same wondrous victories against such an immense odds, or with such comparatively inadequate means. It was also necessary, in the outset of his military history, to show in minute detail the character of his tactics, and illustrate that spirit of energetic concentration, which, neglecting the extremities of an extended line of operations, combined his whole strength, like a bold and skilful fencer, for one thrust at a vital part, which, if successful, must needs be fatal. The astonishing rapidity of his movements, the audacious vivacity of his attack, having been so often described in individual cases, may now be passed over with general allusions; nor will we embarrass ourselves and our readers with minute details of positions, or encumber our pages with the names of obscure villages, unless when there is some battle, calling for a particular narrative, either from its importance or its singularity.

By the direction of the Aulic Council, the Archduke Charles had taken up his position at Friuli, where it had been settled that the sixth Austrian army, designed to act against Buonaparte for the de-

Digitized by Google

fence of the Italo-German frontier, should be assembled. This position was strangely preferred to the Tyrol, where the Archduke could have formed a junction ten days sooner with an additional force of forty thousand men from the army of the Rhine, marching to reinforce his own troops,—men accustomed to fight and conquer under their leader's eye; whilst those with whom he occupied Friuli, and the line of the Piave, belonged to the hapless Imperial forces, which, under Beaulieu, Wurmser, and Alvinzi, had never encountered Buonaparte without incurring some notable defeat.

While the Archduke was yet expecting those reinforcements which were to form the strength of his army, his active adversary was strengthened by more than twenty thousand men, sent from the French armies on the Rhine, and which gave him at the moment a numerical superiority over the Austrian general. Instead, therefore, of waiting, as on former occasions, until the Imperialists should commence the war by descending into Italy, Napoleon resolved to anticipate the march of the succours expected by the Archduke, drive him from his position on the Italian frontiers, and follow him into Germany, even up to the walls of Vienna. No scheme appeared too bold for the general's imagination to form, or his genius to render practicable; and his soldiers, with the view before them of plunging into the midst of an immense

Digitized by Google

empire, and placing chains of mountains betwixt them and every possibility of reinforcement or communication, were so confident in the talents of their leader, as to follow him under the most undoubting expectation of victory. The Directory had induced Buonaparte to expect a co-operation by a similar advance on the part of the armies of the Rhine, as had been attempted in the former campaign.

Buonaparte took the field in the beginning of March, advancing from Bassano. The Austrians had an army of observation under Lusignan on the banks of the Piave, but their principal force was stationed upon the Tagliamento, a river whose course is nearly thirty miles more to the eastward, though collateral with the Piave. The plains on the Tagliamento afforded facilities to the Archduke to employ the noble cavalry who have always been the boast of the Austrian army; and to dislodge him from the strong and mountainous country which he occupied, and which covered the road that penetrates between the mountains and the Adriatic, and forms the mode of communication in that quarter betwixt Vienna and Italy, through Carinthia, it was not only necessary that he should be pressed in front, a service which Buonaparte took upon himself, but also that a French division, occupying the mountains on the Prince's right, should precipitate his retreat by maintaining the perpetual threat of turning him on

Digitized by Google

that wing. With this view, Massena had Buonaparte's orders, which he executed with equal skill and gallantry. He crossed the Piave about the eleventh March, and ascending that river, directed his course into the mountains towards Belluno, driving before him Lusignan's little corps of observation, and finally compelling his rear-guard, to the number of five hundred men, to surrender.

The ArchdukeCharles, in the meantime, continued to maintain his position on the Tagliamento, and the French approached the right bank, with Napoleon at their head, determined apparently to force a passage. Artillery and sharpshooters were disposed in such a manner as to render this a very hazardous attempt, while two beautiful lines of cavalry were drawn up, prepared to charge any troops who might make their way to the left bank, while they were yet in the confusion of landing.

A very simple stratagem disconcerted this fair display of resistance. After a distant cannonade, and some skirmishing, the French army drew off, as if despairing to force their passage, moved to the rear, and took up apparently their bivouac for the night. The Archduke was deceived. He imagined that the French, who had marched all the preceding night, were fatigued, and he also withdrew from the bank of the river to his camp. But two hours afterwards, when all seemed profoundly quiet, the French army suddenly got

Digitized by Google

under arms, and, forming in two lines, marched rapidly to the side of the river, ere the astonished Austrians were able to make the same dispositions as formerly for defence. Arrived on the margin, the first line instantly broke up into columns, which throwing themselves boldly into the stream, protected on the flanks by the cavalry, passed through and attained the opposite bank. They were repeatedly charged by the Austrian cavalry, but it was too late—they had gotten their footing, and kept it. The Archduke attempted to turn their flank, but was prevented by the second line of the French, and by their reserve of cavalry. He was compelled to retreat, leaving prisoners and cannon in the hands of the enemy. Such was the first disastrous meeting between the Archduke Charles and his future relative.

The Austrian Prince had the farther misfortune to learn, that Massena had, at the first sound of the cannonade, pushed across the Tagliamento, higher up than his line of defence, and destroying what troops he found before him, had occupied the passes of the Julian Alps at the sources of that river, and thus interposed himself between the Imperial right wing and the nearest communication with Vienna. Sensible of the importance of this obstacle, the Archduke hastened, if possible, to remove it. He brought up a fine column of grenadiers from the Rhine,

Digitized by Google

which had just arrived at Klagenfurt, in his rear, and joining them to other troops, attacked Massena with the utmost fury, venturing his own person like a private soldier, and once or twice narrowly escaping being made prisoner. It was in vain—all in vain. He charged successively and repeatedly, even with the reserve of the grenadiers, but no exertion could change the fortune of the day.

Still the Archduke hoped to derive assistance from the natural or artificial defences of the strong country through which he was thus retreating, and in doing so was involuntarily introducing Buonaparte, after he should have surmounted the border frontier, into the most fertile provinces of his brother's empire. The Lisonzo, usually a deep and furious torrent, closed in by a chain of impassable mountains, seemed to oppose an insurmountable barrier to his daring pursuers. But nature, as well as events, fought against the Austrians. The stream, reduced by frost, was fordable in several places. The river thus passed, the town of Gradisca, which had been covered with field-works to protect the line of the Lisonzo, was surprised and carried by storm, and its garrison of two thousand five hundred men made prisoners, by the divisions of Bernadotte and Serrurier.

Pushed in every direction, the Austrians sustained every day additional and more severe losses. The

Digitized by Google

strong fort of Chiusa-Veneta was occupied by Massena, who continued his active and indefatigable operations on the right of the retreating army. This success caused the envelopement, and dispersion or surrender, of a whole division of Austrians, five thousand of whom remained prisoners, while their baggage, cannon, colours, and all that constituted them an army, fell into the hands of the French. Four generals were made prisoners on this occasion; and many of the mountaineers of Carniola and Croatia, who had joined the Austrian army from their natural love of war, seeing that success appeared to have abandoned the Imperial cause, became despondent, broke up their corps, and retired as stragglers to their villages.

Buonaparte availed himself of their loss of courage, and had recourse to proclamations, a species of arms which he valued himself as much upon using to advantage, as he did upon his military fame. He assured them that the French did not come into their country to innovate on their rights, religious customs, and manners. He exhorted them not to meddle in a war with which they had no concern, but encouraged them to afford assistance and furnish supplies to the French army, in payment of which he proposed to assign the public taxes which they had been in the habit of paying to the Emperor. His proposal seems to have reconciled the Carinthians to the presence of the French, or, more properly speaking, they

Digitized by Google

submitted to the military exactions which they had no means of resisting. In the meanwhile, the French took possession of Triest and Fiume, the only seaports belonging to Austria, where they seized much English merchandize, which was always a welcome prize, and of the quicksilver mines of Idria, where they found a valuable deposit of that mineral.

Napoleon repaired the fortifications of Klagenfurt, and converted it into a respectable place of arms, where he established his head-quarters. In a space of scarce twenty days, he had defeated the Austrians in ten combats, in the course of which Prince Charles had lost at least one-fourth of his army. The French had surmounted the southern chain of the Julian Alps; the northern line could, it was supposed, offer no obstacle sufficient to stop their irresistible general; and the Archduke, the pride and hope of the Austrian armies, had retired behind the river Meuhr, and seemed to be totally without the means of covering Vienna.

There were, however, circumstances less favourable to the French, which require to be stated. When the campaign commenced, the French general Joubert was posted with his division in the gorge of the Tyrol above Trent, upon the same river Levisa, the line of which had been lost and won during the preceding winter. He was opposed by the Austrian generals Kerpen and Laudon, who, besides

Digitized by Google

some regular regiments, had collected around them a number of the Tyrolese militia, who among their own mountains were at least equally formidable. They remained watching each other during the earlier part of the campaign; but the gaining of the battle of the Tagliamento was the signal for Joubert to commence the offensive. His directions were to push his way through the Tyrol to Brixen, at which place Napoleon expected he might hear news of the advance of the French armies from the Rhine, to co-operate in the march upon Vienna. But the Directory, fearing perhaps to trust nearly the whole force of the Republic in the hands of a general so successful and so ambitious as Napoleon, had not fulfilled their promises in this respect. The army of Moreau had not as yet crossed the Rhine.

Joubert, thus disappointed of his promised object, began to find himself in an embarrassing situation. The whole country was in insurrection around him, and a retreat in the line by which he had advanced, might have exposed him to great loss, if not to destruction. He determined, therefore, to elude the enemy, and, by descending the river Drave, to achieve a junction with his commander-in-chief Napoleon. He accomplished his difficult march by breaking down the bridges behind him, and thus arresting the progress of the enemy; but it was with difficulty, and not without loss, that he effected his



Digitized by Google

proposed union, and his retreat from the Tyrol gave infinite spirits not only to the martial Tyrolese, but to all the favourers of Austria in the north of Italy. The Austrian general Laudon sallied from the Tyrol at the head of a considerable force, and compelled the slender body of French under Balland, to shut themselves up in garrisons; and their opponents were for the moment again lords of a part of Lombardy. They also re-occupied Trieste and Fiume, which Buonaparte had not been able sufficiently to garrison; so that the rear of the French army seemed to be endangered.

The Venetians, at this crisis, fatally for their ancient republic, if indeed its doom had not, as is most likely, been long before sealed, received with eager ears the accounts, exaggerated as they were by rumour, that the French were driven from the Tyrol, and the Austrians about to descend the Adige, and resume their ancient empire in Italy. The senate were aware that neither their government nor their persons were acceptable to the French general, and that they had offended him irreconcilably by declining the intimate alliance and contribution of troops which he had demanded. He had parted from them with such menaces as were not easily to be misunderstood. They believed, if his vengeance might not be instant, it was only the more sure; and conceiving him now deeply engaged in Germany, and surrounded by

Digitized by Google

the Austrian levies en masse from the warlike countries of Hungary and Croatia, they imagined that throwing their own weight into the scale at so opportune a moment, must weigh it down for ever. To chastise their insurgent subjects of Bergamo and Brescia, was an additional temptation.

Their mode of making war savoured of the ancient vindictive temper ascribed to their countrymen. An insurrection was secretly organised through all the territories which Venice still possessed on the mainland, and broke out, like the celebrated Sicilian vespers, in blood and massacre. In Verona they assassinated more than a hundred Frenchmen, many of them sick soldiers in the hospitals,—an abominable cruelty, which could not fail to bring a curse on their undertaking. Fioravante, a Venetian general, marched at the head of a body of Sclavonians to besiege the forts of Verona, into which the remaining French had made their retreat, and where they defended themselves. Laudon made his appearance with his Austrians and Tyrolese, and it seemed as if the fortunes of Buonaparte had at length found a check.

But the awakening from this pleasing dream was equally sudden and dreadful. News arrived that preliminaries of peace had been agreed upon, and an armistice signed between France and Austria. Laudon, therefore, and the auxiliaries on whom the Venetians had so much relied, retired from Verona

Digitized by Google

The Lombards sent an army to the assistance of the French. The Sclavonians, under Fioravante, after fighting vigorously, were compelled to surrender The insurgent towns of Vicenza, Treviso, and Padua, were again occupied by the Republicans. Rumour proclaimed the terrible return of Napoleon and his army, and the ill-advised senate of Venice were lost in stupor, and scarce had sense left to decide betwixt unreserved submission and hopeless defence.

It was one of the most artful rules in Buonaparte's policy, that when he had his enemy at decided advantage, by some point having been attained which seemed to give a complete turn to the campaign in his favour, he seldom failed to offer peace, and peace upon conditions much more favourable than perhaps the opposite party expected. By doing this, he secured such immediate and undisputed fruits of his victory, as the treaty of peace contained; and he was sure of means to prosecute farther advantages at some future opportunity. He obtained, moreover, the character of generosity; and, in the present instance, he avoided the great danger of urging to bay so formidable a power as Austria, whose despair might be capable of the most formidable efforts.

With this purpose, and assuming for the first time that disregard for the usual ceremonial of courts, and etiquette of politics, which he afterwards seemed to

Digitized by Google

have pleasure in displaying, he wrote a letter in person to the Archduke Charles on the subject of peace.

This composition affects that abrupt laconic severity of style, which cuts short argument, by laying down general maxims of philosophy of a trite character, and breaks through the usual laboured periphrastic introductions with which ordinary politicians preface their proposals, when desirous of entering upon a treaty. "It is the part of a brave soldier," he said, "to make war, but to wish for peace. The present strife has lasted six years. Have we not yet slain enough of men, and sufficiently outraged humanity? Peace is demanded on all sides. Europe at large has laid down the arms assumed against the French Republic. Your nation remains alone in hostility, and yet blood flows faster than ever. This sixth campaign has commenced under ominous circumstances—End how it will, some thousands of men more will be slain on either side; and at length, after all, we must come to an agreement, for everything must have an end at last, even the angry passions of men. The Executive Directory made known to the Emperor their desire to put a period to the war which desolates both countries, but the intervention of the Court of London opposed it. Is there then no means of coming to an understanding, and must we continue to cut each other's throats for the interests or passions of a nation, herself a stranger to the

Digitized by Google

miseries of war? You, the General-in-chief, who approach by birth so near to the crown, and are above all those petty passions which agitate ministers, and the members of government, will you resolve to be the benefactor of mankind, and the true saviour of Germany? Do not suppose that I mean by that expression to intimate, that it is impossible for you to defend yourself by force of arms; but under the supposition, that fortune were to become favourable to you, Germany would be equally exposed to ravage. With respect to my own feelings, General, if this proposition should be the means of saving one single man's life, I should prefer a civic crown so merited, to the melancholy glory attending military success."

The whole tone of the letter is ingeniously calculated to give the proposition the character of moderation, and at the same time to avoid the appearance of too ready an advance towards his object. The Archduke, after a space of two days, returned this brief answer, in which he stripped Buonaparte's proposal of its gilding, and treated it upon the footing of an ordinary proposal for a treaty of peace, made by a party, who finds it convenient for his interest:—"Unquestionably, sir, in making war, and in following the road prescribed by honour and duty, I desire as much as you the attainment of peace for the happiness of the people, and of humanity. Considering, however, that in the situation which I hold,

Digitized by Google

it is no part of my business to inquire into and determine the quarrel of the belligerent powers; and that I am not furnished on the part of the Emperor with any plenipotentiary powers for treating, you will excuse me, General, if I do not enter into negotiation with you touching a matter of the highest importance, but which does not lie within my department. Whatever shall happen, either respecting the future chances of the war, or the prospect of peace, I request you to be equally convinced of my distinguished esteem."

The Archduke would willingly have made some advantage of this proposal, by obtaining an armistice of five hours, sufficient to enable him to form a junction with the corps of Kerpen, which, having left the Tyrol to come to the assistance of the commander-in-chief, was now within a short distance. But Buonaparte took care not to permit himself to be hampered by any such ill-timed engagement, and after some sharp fighting, in which the French as usual were successful, he was able to interpose such a force as to prevent the junction taking place.

Two encounters followed at Neumark and at Unzmark—both gave rise to fresh disasters, and the continued retreat of the Archduke Charles and the Imperial army. The French general then pressed forward on the road to Vienna, through mountain-passes and defiles, which could not have been opened



Digitized by Google

otherwise than by turning them on the flank. But these natural fastnesses were no longer defences. Judenburg, the capital of Upper Styria, was abandoned to the French without a blow, and shortly after Buonaparte entered Gratz, the principal town of Lower Styria, with the same facility.

The Archduke now totally changed his plan of warfare. He no longer disputed the ground foot by foot, but began to retreat by hasty marches towards Vienna, determined to collect the last and utmost strength which the extensive states of the Emperor could supply, and fight for the existence, it might be, of his brother's throne, under the walls of his capital. However perilous this resolution might appear, it was worthy of the high-spirited prince by whom it was adopted; and there were reasons, perhaps, besides those arising from soldierly pride and princely dignity, which seemed to recommend it.

The army with which the enterprising French general was now about to debouche from the mountains, and enter the very centre of Germany, had suffered considerably since the commencement of the campaign, not only by the sword, but by severity of weather, and the excessive fatigue which they endured in executing the rapid marches, by which their leader succeeded in securing victory; and the French armies on the Rhine had not, as the plan of the cam-



Digitized by Google

paign dictated, made any movement in advance corresponding with the march of Buonaparte.

Nor, in the country which they were about to enter with diminished forces, could Buonaparte trust to the influence of the same moral feeling in the people invaded, which had paved the way to so many victories on the Rhine. The citizens of Austria, though living under a despotic government, are little sensible of its severities, and are sincerely attached to the Emperor, whose personal habits incline him to live with his people without much form, and mix in public amusements, or appear in the public walks, like a father in the midst of his family. The nobility were as ready as in former times to bring out their vassals, and a general knowledge of discipline is familiar to the German peasant as a part of his education. Hungary possessed still the high-spirited race of barons and cavaliers, who, in their great convocation in 1740, rose at once, and drawing their sabres, joined in the celebrated exclamation, "*Moriamur pro rege nostro, Maria Teresa!*" The Tyrol was in possession of its own warlike inhabitants, all in arms, and so far successful, as to have driven Joubert out of their mountains. Trieste and Fiume were retaken in the rear of the French army. Buonaparte had no line of communication when separated from Italy, and no means of obtaining supplies, but from a country which would probably be soon in insurrection in his rear, as well as

Digitized by Google

on his flanks. A battle lost, when there was neither support, reserve, nor place of arms nearer than Klagenfurt, would have been annihilation. To add to these considerations, it was now known that the Venetian Republic had assumed a formidable and hostile aspect in Italy; by which, joined to a natural explosion of feeling, religious and national, the French cause was considerably endangered in that country. There were so many favourers of the old system, together with the general influence of the Catholic clergy, that it seemed not unlikely this insurrection might spread fast and far. Italy, in that case, would have been no effectual place of refuge to Buonaparte or his army. The Archduke enumerated all these advantages to the cabinet of Vienna, and exhorted them to stand the last cast of the bloody die.

But the terror, grief, and confusion, natural in a great metropolis, whose peace for the first time for so many years was alarmed with the approach of the unconquered and apparently fated general, who, having defeated and destroyed five of their choicest armies, was now driving under its walls the remnants of the last, though commanded by that prince whom they regarded as the hope and flower of Austrian warfare, opposed this daring resolution. The alarm was general, beginning with the court itself; and the most valuable property and treasure were packed up to be carried into Hungary, where the Royal Family deter-

Digitized by Google

mined to take refuge. It is worthy of mention, that among the fugitives of the Imperial House was the Arch-Duchess Maria Louisa, then between five and six years old, whom our imagination may conceive agitated by every species of childish terror derived from the approach of the victorious general, on whom she was, at a future and similar crisis, destined to bestow her hand.

The cries of the wealthy burghers were of course for peace. The enemy were within fourteen or fifteen days' march of their walls; nor had the city (perhaps fortunately) any fortifications, which in the modern state of war could have made it defensible even for a day. They were, moreover, seconded by a party in the cabinet; and, in short, whether it chanced for good or for evil, the selfish principle of those who had much to lose, and were timid in proportion, predominated against that, which desired at all risks the continuance of a determined and obstinate defence. It required many lessons to convince both sovereign and people, that it is better to put all on the hazard —better even to lose all, than to sanction the being pillaged at different times, and by degrees, under pretence of friendship and amity. A bow which is forcibly strained back will regain its natural position; but if supple enough to yield of itself to the counter direction, it will never recover its elasticity.

The affairs, however, of the Austrians were in such

Digitized by Google

a condition, that it could hardly be said whether the party who declared for peace, to obtain some respite from the distresses of the country, or those who wished to continue war with the chances of success which we have indicated, advised the least embarrassing course. The Court of Vienna finally adopted the alternative of treaty, and that of Leoben was set on foot.

Generals Bellegarde and Merfield, on the part of the Emperor, presented themselves at the head-quarters of Buonaparte, 13th April 1797, and announced the desire of their sovereign for peace. Buonaparte granted a suspension of arms, to endure for five days only; which was afterwards extended, when the probability of the definitive treaty of peace was evident.

It is affirmed, that in the whole discussions respecting this most important armistice, Napoleon—as a conqueror whose victories had been in a certain degree his own, whose army had been supported and paid from the resources of the country which he conquered, who had received reinforcements from France only late and reluctantly, and who had recruited his army by new levies among the republicanized Italians—maintained an appearance of independence of the government of France. He had, even at this period, assumed a freedom of thought and action, the tenth

Digitized by Google

part of the suspicion attached to which would have cost the most popular general his head in the times of Danton and Robespierre. But, though acquired slowly, and in counteraction to the once overpowering, and still powerful, democratic influence, the authority of Buonaparte was great; and indeed, the power which a conquering general attains, by means of his successes, in the bosom of his soldiers, becomes soon formidable to any species of government, where the soldier is not intimately interested in the liberties of the subject.

Yet it must not be supposed that Napoleon exhibited publicly any of that spirit of independence which the Directory appear to have dreaded, and which, according to the opinion which he himself intimates, seems to have delayed the promised cooperation, which was to be afforded by the eastern armies on the banks of the Rhine. Far from testifying such a feeling, his assertion of the rights of the Republic was decidedly striking, of which the following is a remarkable instance. The Austrian commissioner, in hopes to gain some credit for the admission, had stated in the preliminary articles of the convention, as a concession of consequence, that his Imperial Majesty acknowledged the French government in its present state. "Strike out that condition," said Buonaparte, sternly; "the French Republic is like the sun in heaven. The misfor-

Digitized by Google

tune lies with those who are so blind as to be ignorant of the existence of either." It was gallantly spoken; but how strange to reflect, that the same individual, in three or four years afterwards, was able to place an extinguisher on one of those suns, without even an eclipse being the consequence.*

It is remarkable also, that while asserting to foreigners this supreme dignity of the French Republic, Buonaparte should have departed so far from the respect he owed its rulers. The preliminaries of peace were proposed for signature on the 18th April. But General Clarke, to whom the Directory had committed full powers to act in the matter, was still at Turin. He was understood to be the full confident of his masters, and to have instructions to watch the motions of Buonaparte, nay to place him under arrest, should he see cause to doubt his fealty to the French government. Napoleon, nevertheless, did not hesitate to tender his individual signature and warrantry, and these were readily admitted by the Austrian plenipotentiaries;—an ominous sign of the declension of the powers of the Directory, consider-

* Buonaparte first mentions this circumstance as having taken place at Leoben, afterwards at the definitive treaty of Campo Formio. The effect is the same, wherever the words were spoken.

Digitized by Google

ing that a military general, without the support even of the commissioners from the government, or proconsuls, as they were called, was regarded as sufficient to ratify a treaty of such consequence. No doubt seems to have been entertained that he had the power to perform what he had guaranteed; and the part which he acted was the more remarkable, considering the high commission of General Clarke.

The articles in the treaty of Leoben remained long secret; the cause of which appears to have been, that the high contracting parties were not willing comparisons should be made between the preliminaries as they were originally settled, and the strange and violent alterations which occurred in the definitive treaty of Campo Formio. These two treaties of pacification differed, the one from the other, in relation to the degree and manner how a meditated partition of the territory of Venice, of the Cisalpine republic, and other smaller powers, was to be accomplished, for the mutual benefit of France and Austria. It is melancholy to observe, but it is nevertheless an important truth, that there is no moment during which independent states of the second class have more occasion to be alarmed for their security, than when more powerful nations in their vicinity are about to conclude peace. It is so easy to accommodate these differences of the strong at the expense of such weaker states, as, if they are injured, have neither the

Digitized by Google

power of making their complaints heard, nor of defending themselves by force, that, in the iron age in which it has been our fate to live, the injustice of such an arrangement has never been considered as offering any counterpoise to its great convenience, whatever the law of nations might teach to the contrary.

It is unnecessary to enter upon the subject of the preliminaries of Leoben, until we notice the treaty of Campo Formio, under which they were finally modified, and by which they were adjusted and controlled. It may be, however, the moment to state, that Buonaparte was considerably blamed, by the Directory and others, for stopping short in the career of conquest, and allowing the House of Austria terms which left her still formidable to France, when, said the censors, it would have cost him but another victory to blot the most constant and powerful enemy of the French Republic out of the map of Europe; or, at least, to confine her to her hereditary states in Germany. To such criticism he replied, in a dispatch to the Directory from Leoben, during the progress of the treaty: "If at the commencement of these Italian campaigns I had made a point of going to Turin, I should never have passed the Po—had I insisted prematurely on advancing to Rome, I could never have secured Milan—and now had I

Digitized by Google

made an indispensable object of reaching Vienna, I might have destroyed the Republic."

Such was his able and judicious defence of a conduct, which, by stopping short of some ultimate and extreme point apparently within his grasp, extracted every advantage from fear, which despair perhaps might not have yielded him, if the enemy had been driven to extremity. And it is remarkable, that the catastrophe of Napoleon himself was a corollary of the doctrine which he now laid down; for, had he not insisted upon penetrating to Moscow, there is no judging how much longer he might have held the empire of France.

The contents of the treaty of Leoben, so far as they were announced to the representatives of the French nation by the Directory, only made known as part of the preliminaries, that the cession of the Belgic provinces, and of such a boundary as France might choose to demand upon the Rhine, had been admitted by Austria; and that she had consented to recognise a single Republic in Italy, to be composed out of those which had been provisionally established. But shortly afterwards it transpired, that Mantua, the subject of so much and such bloody contest, and the very citadel of Italy, as had appeared from the events of these sanguinary campaigns, was to be resigned to Austria, from whose tenacious grasp it had been wrenched with so much difficulty. This measure

Digitized by Google

was unpopular; and it will be found that Buonaparte had the ingenuity, in the definitive treaty of peace, to substitute an indemnification, which he ought not to have given, and which was certainly the last which the Austrians should have accepted.

It was now the time for Venice to tremble. She had declared against the French in their absence; her vindictive population had murdered many of them; the resentment of the French soldiers was excited to the utmost, and the Venetians had no right to reckon upon the forbearance of their general. The treaty of Leoben left the Senate of that ancient state absolutely without support; nay, as they afterwards learned, Austria, after pleading their cause for a certain time, had ended by stipulating for a share of their spoils, which had been assigned to her by a secret article of the treaty. The doom of the oligarchy was pronounced ere Buonaparte had yet traversed the Noric and Julian Alps, for the purpose of enforcing it. By a letter to the Doge, dated from the capital of Upper Styria, Napoleon, bitterly upbraiding the senate for requiting his generosity with treachery and ingratitude, demanded that they should return by his aid-de-camp who bore the letter, their instant choice betwixt war and peace, and allowing them only four-and-twenty hours to disperse their insurgent peasantry, and submit to his clemency.

Digitized by Google

Junot, introduced into the senate, made the threats of his master ring in the astounded ears of the members, and by the blunt and rough manner of a soldier, who had risen from the ranks, added to the dismay of the trembling nobles. The senate returned a humble apology to Buonaparte, and dispatched agents to deprecate his wrath. These envoys were doomed to experience one of those scenes of violence, which were in some degree natural to this extraordinary man, but to which in certain cases he seems to have designedly given way, in order to strike consternation into those whom he addressed. "Are the prisoners at liberty?" he said, with a stern voice, and without replying to the humble greetings of the terrified envoys. They answered with hesitation, that they had liberated the French, the Polish, and the Brescians, who had been made captive in the insurrectionary war. "I will have them all—all!" exclaimed Buonaparte—"all who are in prison on account of their political sentiments. I will go myself to destroy your dungeons on the Bridge of Tears—opinions shall be free—I will have no Inquisition. If all the prisoners are not set at instant liberty, the English envoy dismissed, the people disarmed, I declare instant war. I might have gone to Vienna if I had listed—I have concluded a peace with the Emperor—I have eighty thousand men, twenty gun-boats—I will hear of no Inquisition, and

Digitized by Google

no Senate either—I will dictate the law to you—I will prove an Attila to Venice. If you cannot disarm your population, I will do it in your stead—your government is antiquated—it must crumble to pieces."

While Buonaparte, in these disjointed yet significant threats, stood before the deputies like the Argantes of Italy's heroic poet, and gave them the choice of peace and war with the air of a superior being, capable at once to dictate their fate, he had not yet heard of the massacre of Verona, or of the batteries of a Venetian fort on the Lido having fired upon a French vessel, who had run into the port to escape the pursuit of two armed Austrian ships. The vessel was alleged to have been sunk, and the master and some of the crew to have been killed. The news of these fresh aggressions did not fail to aggravate his indignation to the highest pitch. The terrified deputies ventured to touch with delicacy on the subject of pecuniary atonement. Buonaparte's answer was worthy of a Roman. "If you could proffer me," he said, "the treasures of Peru—if you could strew the whole district with gold, it could not atone for the French blood which has been treacherously spilt."

Accordingly, on the 3d of May, Buonaparte declared war against Venice, and ordered the French minister to leave the city; the French troops, and those of the new Italian republics, were at the same

Digitized by Google

time commanded to advance, and to destroy in their progress, wherever they found it displayed, the winged Lion of Saint Mark, the ancient emblem of Venetian sovereignty. The declaration is dated at Palma Nova.

It had been already acted upon by the French who were on the Venetian frontier, and by La Hotze, a remarkable character, who was then at the head of the army of the Italian republics of the new model, and the forces of the towns of Brescia and Bergamo, which aspired to the same independence. This commander was of Swiss extraction; an excellent young officer, and at that time enamoured of liberty on the French system, though he afterwards saw so much reason to change his opinions, that he lost his life, as we may have occasion to mention, fighting under the Austrian banners.

The terrified Senate of Venice proved unworthy descendants of the Zenos, Dandolos, and Morosinis, as the defenders of Christendom, and the proud opposers of Papal oppression. The best resource they could imagine to themselves, was to employ at Paris those golden means of intercession which Buonaparte had so sturdily rejected. Napoleon assures us, that they found favour by means of these weighty arguments. The Directory, moved, we are informed, by the motives of ten millions of French francs, transmitted from Venice in bills of exchange, sent to

Digitized by Google

the General of Italy orders to spare the ancient senate and aristocracy. But the account of the transaction, with the manner in which the remittances were distributed, fell into the hands of Napoleon, by dispatches intercepted at Milan. The members of the French government, whom these documents would have convicted of peculation and bribery, were compelled to be silent; and Buonaparte, availing himself of some chicanery as to certain legal solemnities, took it on him totally to disregard the orders he had received.

The Senate of Venice, rather stupified than stimulated by the excess of their danger, were holding on the 30th April a sort of privy council in the apartments of the Doge, when a letter from the commandant of their flotilla informed them, that the French were erecting fortifications on the low grounds contiguous to the lagoons or shallow channels which divide from the main land and from each other the little isles on which the amphibious Mistress of the Adriatic holds her foundation; and proposing, in the blunt style of a gallant sailor, to batter them to pieces about their ears before the works could be completed. Indeed, nothing would have been more easy than to defend the lagoons against an enemy, who, notwithstanding Napoleon's bravado, had not even a single boat. But the proposal, had it been made to an



Digitized by Google

abbess and a convent of nuns, could scarce have appeared more extraordinary than it did to these degenerate nobles. Yet the sense of shame prevailed; and though trembling for the consequences of the order which they issued, the Senate directed that the admiral should proceed to action. Immediately after the order was received, their deliberations were interrupted by the thunder of the cannon on either side —the Venetian gun-boats pouring their fire on the van of the French army, which had begun to arrive at Fusina.

To interrupt these ominous sounds, two plenipotentiaries were dispatched to make intercession with the French general; and to prevent delay, the Doge himself undertook to report the result.

The Grand Council was convoked on the 1st May, when the Doge, pale in countenance, and disconcerted in demeanour, proposed, as the only means of safety, the admission of some democratic modifications into their forms, under the direction of General Buonaparte; or, in other words, to lay their institutions at the feet of the conqueror, to be re-modelled at his pleasure. Of six hundred and ninety patricians, only twenty-one dissented from a vote which inferred the absolute surrender of their constitution. The conditions to be agreed on were indeed declared subject to the revision of the Council; but this, in the



Digitized by Google

circumstances, could only be considered as a clause intended to save appearances. The surrender must have been regarded as unconditional and total.

Amidst the dejection and confusion which possessed the government, some able intriguer (the secretary, it was said, of the French ambassador at Venice, whose principal had been recalled) contrived to induce the Venetian government to commit an act of absolute suicide, so as to spare Buonaparte the trouble and small degree of scandal which might attach to totally destroying the existence of the Republic.

On the 9th of May, as the committee of the Great Council were in close deliberation with the Doge, two strangers intruded upon those councils, which heretofore—such was the jealous severity of the oligarchy—were like those of supernatural beings, those who looked on them died. But now, affliction, confusion, and fear, had withdrawn the guards from these secret and mysterious chambers, and laid open to the intrusion of strangers those stern haunts of a suspicious oligarchy, where, in other days, an official or lictor of the government might have been punished with death even for too loud a foot-fall, far more for the fatal crime of having heard more than was designed to come to his knowledge. All this was now ended; and without check or rebuke the two strangers were permitted to communicate with the senate by writing.



Digitized by Google

Their advice, which had the terms of a command, was, to anticipate the intended reforms of the French —to dissolve the present government—throw open their prisons—disband their Sclavonian soldiers—plant the tree of liberty on the Place of Saint Marc, and to take other popular measures of the same nature, the least of which, proposed but a few months before, would have been a signal of death to the individual who had dared to hint at it.

An English satirist has told us a story of a man persuaded by an eloquent friend to hang himself, in order to preserve his life.* The story of the fall of Venice vindicates the boldness of the satire. It does not appear that Buonaparte could have gone farther, nay it seems unlikely he would have gone so far, as was now recommended.

As the friendly advisers had hinted that the utmost speed was necessary, the committee scarce interposed an interval of three days, between receiving the advice and recommending it to the Great Council; and began in the meanwhile to anticipate the destruction of their government and surrender of their city, by dismantling their fleet and disbanding their soldiers.

At length the Great Council assembled on the

* Dr Arbuthnot, in the History of John Bull.

Digitized by Google

31st May. The Doge had commenced a pathetic discourse on the extremities to which the country was reduced, when an irregular discharge of fire-arms took place under the very windows of the Council-house. All started up in confusion. Some supposed the Sclavonians were plundering the citizens; some that the lower orders had risen on the nobility; others, that the French had entered Venice, and were proceeding to sack and pillage it. The terrified and timid counsellors did not wait to inquire what was the real cause of the disturbance, but hurried forward, like sheep, in the path which had been indicated to them. They hastened to despoil their ancient government of all authority, to sign in a manner its sentence of civil death—added everything which could render the sacrifice more agreeable to Buonaparte—and separated in confusion, but under the impression that they had taken the best measure in their power for quelling the tumult, by meeting the wishes of the predominant party. But this was by no means the case. On the contrary, they had the misfortune to find that the insurrection, of which the firing was the signal, was directed not against the aristocrats, but against those who proposed the surrender of the national independence. Armed bands shouted, "Long live Saint Marc, and perish foreign domination!" Others indeed there were, who displayed in opposition three-coloured banners, with the war-cry of "Li-

Digitized by Google

berty for ever!" The disbanded and mutinous soldiers mixed among these hostile groups, and threatened the town with fire and pillage.

Amid this horrible confusion, and while the parties were firing on each other, a provisional government was hastily named. Boats were dispatched to bring three thousand French soldiers into the city. These took possession of the Place of Saint Marc, while some of the inhabitants shouted; but the greater part, who were probably not the less sensible of the execrable tyranny of the old aristocracy, saw it fall in mournful silence, because there fell, along with the ancient institutions of their country, however little some of these were to be regretted, the honour and independence of the state itself.

The terms which the French granted, or rather imposed, appeared sufficiently moderate, so far as they were made public. They announced that the foreign troops would remain so long, and no longer, than might be necessary to protect the peace of Venice—they undertook to guarantee the public debt, and the payment of the pensions allowed to the impoverished gentry. They required, indeed, the continuance of the prosecution against the commander of that fort of Luco who had fired on the French vessel; but all other offenders were pardoned, and Buonaparte afterwards suffered even this affair to pass into obli-

Digitized by Google

vion; which excited doubt whether the transaction had ever been so serious as had been alleged.

Five secret and less palatable articles attended these avowed conditions. One provided for the various exchanges of territory which had been already settled at the Venetian expense betwixt Austria and France. The second and third stipulated the payment of three millions of francs in specie, and as many in naval stores. Another prescribed the cession of three ships of war, and of two frigates, armed and equipped. A fifth ratified the exaction, in the usual style of French cupidity, of twenty pictures and five hundred manuscripts.

It will be seen hereafter what advantages the Venetians purchased by all these unconscionable conditions. At the moment, they understood that the stipulations were to imply a guarantee of the independent existence of their country as a democratical state. In the meanwhile, the necessity for raising the supplies to gratify the rapacity of the French, obliged the provisional government to have recourse to forced loans; and in this manner they inhospitably plundered the Duke of Modena (who had fled to Venice for refuge when Buonaparte first entered Lombardy) of his remaining treasure, amounting to one hundred and ninety thousand sequins.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER X.

*Napoleon's amatory Correspondence with Josephine.—His Court at Montebello.—Negotiations and Pleasure mingled there.—Genoa.—Revolutionary spirit of the Genoese.—They rise in insurrection, but are quelled by the Government, and the French plundered and imprisoned.—Buonaparte interferes, and appoints the outlines of a new Government.—Sardinia.—Naples.—The Cispadane, Transpadane, and Emilian Republics, united under the name of the Cisalpine Republic.—The Valteline.—The Grisons.—The Valteline united to Lombardy.—Great improvement of Italy, and the Italian Character, from these changes.—Difficulties in the way of Pacification betwixt France and Austria.—The Directory and Napoleon take different views.—Treaty of Campo Formio.—Buonaparte takes leave of the Army of Italy, to act as French Plenipotentiary at Rastadt.*

WHEN peace returns, it brings back the domestic affections, and affords the means of indulging them. Buonaparte was yet a bridegroom, though he had now been two years married, and upwards. A part of his correspondence with his bride has been preser-

Digitized by Google

ved,* and gives a curious picture of a temperament as fiery in love as in war. The language of the

* It is published in a Tour through the Netherlands, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Savoy, and France, in the years 1821-2, by Charles Tennant, Esq. Longman & Co. London, 2 vols. 8vo. Autographs of the letters are given, and there seems no reason to doubt their authenticity. The following may serve as a specimen, and will perhaps confirm the opinion of a great lawyer, that love-letters seem the most unutterable nonsense in the world to all but the person who writes, and the party who receives them :—

"By what art is it that you have been able to captivate all my facultics, and to concentrate in yourself my moral existence? It is a magic, my sweet love, which will finish only with my life. To live for Josephine—there is the history of my life. I am trying to reach you,—I am dying to be near you. Fool that I am, I do not perceive that I increase the distance between us. What lands, what countries separate us! What a time before you read these weak expressions of a troubled soul in which you reign! Ah! my adorable wife, I know not what fate awaits me, but if it keep me much longer from you it will be insupportable,—my courage will not go so far. There was a time when I was proud of my courage; and sometimes, when contemplating on the ills that man could do me, on the fate which destiny could reserve for me, I fixed my eyes steadfastly on the most unheard-of misfortunes without a frown, without alarm;—but now the idea that my Josephine may be unwell, the idea that she may be ill, and, above all, the cruel, the fatal thought, that she may love me less, withers my soul, stops my blood, renders me sad, cast down, and leaves me not even the courage of fury and despair. Formerly I used often to say to myself, men could not hurt him who could die without regret; but, now, to die without being loved by thee, to die without that certainty, is the torment of hell; it is the lively and striking image of absolute annihilation—I feel as if I were stifled. My incomparable companion, thou whom fate has destined to make along with me the painful journey of life, the day on which I shall cease to possess thy heart will be the day on which parched nature will be to me without warmth or vegetation.

Digitized by Google

conqueror, who was disposing of states at his pleasure, and defeating the most celebrated commanders of the time, is as enthusiastic as that of an Arcadian. We cannot suppress the truth, that (in passages which we certainly shall not quote) it carries a tone of indelicacy, which, notwithstanding the intimacy of the married state, an English husband would not use, nor an English wife consider as the becoming expression of connubial affection. There seems no doubt, however, that the attachment which these letters indicate was perfectly sincere, and on one occasion at least, it was chivalrously expressed;—"Wurmser shall buy dearly the tears which he makes you shed!"

It appears from this correspondence that Josephine had rejoined her husband under the guardianship of Junot, when he returned from Paris,

---

"I stop, my sweet love, my soul is sad—my body is fatigued—my head is giddy—men disgust me—I ought to hate them—they separate me from my beloved.

"I am at Port Maurice, near Oneille; to-morrow I shall be at Albenga; the two armies are in motion—We are endeavouring to deceive each other—Victory to the most skilful! I am pretty well satisfied with Beaulieu—If he alarm me much he is a better man than his predecessor. I shall beat him I hope in good style. Do not be uneasy—love me as your eyes—but that is not enough—as yourself, more than yourself, than your thought, your mind, your sight, your all. Sweet love, forgive me,—I am sinking. Nature is weak for him who feels strongly, for him whom you love!"

Digitized by Google

after having executed his mission of delivering to the Directory, and representatives of the French people, the banners and colours taken from Beaulieu. In December 1796, Josephine was at Genoa, where she was received with studied magnificence, by those in that ancient state who adhered to the French interest, and where, to the scandal of the rigid Catholics, the company continued assembled, at a ball given by Monsieur de Serva, till a late hour on Friday morning, despite the presence of a senator having in his pocket, but not venturing to enforce, a decree of the senate for the better observation of the fast day upon the occasion. These, however, were probably only occasional visits; but after the signature of the treaty of Leoben, and during the various negotiations which took place before it was finally adjusted, as ratified at Campo Formio, Josephine lived in domestic society with her husband, at the beautiful seat, or rather palace, of Montebello.

This villa, celebrated from the important negotiations of which it was the scene, is situated a few leagues from Milan, on a gently sloping hill, which commands an extensive prospect over the fertile plains of Lombardy. The ladies of the highest rank, as well as those celebrated for beauty and accomplishments,—all, in short, who could add charms to society,—were daily paying their homage to Josephine, who received them with a felicity of ad-

Digitized by Google

dress which seemed as if she had been born for exercising the high courtesies that devolved upon the wife of so distinguished a person as Napoleon.

Negotiations proceeded amid gaiety and pleasure. The various ministers and envoys of Austria, of the Pope, of the Kings of Naples and Sardinia, of the Duke of Parma, of the Swiss Cantons, of several of the Princes of Germany,—the throng of generals, of persons in authority, of deputies of towns,—with the daily arrival and dispatch of numerous couriers, the bustle of important business, mingled with fetes and entertainments, with balls and with hunting parties, —gave the picture of a splendid court, and the assemblage was called accordingly, by the Italians, the Court of Montebello. It was such in point of importance; for the deliberations agitated there were to regulate the political relations of Germany, and decide the fate of the King of Sardinia, of Switzerland, of Venice, of Genoa; all destined to hear from the voice of Napoleon, the terms on which their national existence was to be prolonged or terminated.

Montebello was not less the abode of pleasure. The sovereigns of this diplomatic and military court made excursions to the Lago Maggiore, to Lago di Como, to the Borromean islands, and occupied at pleasure the villas which surround those delicious regions. Every town, every village, desired to distinguish itself by some peculiar mark of homage and respect to him,

Digitized by Google

whom they then named the Liberator of Italy These expressions are in a great measure those of Napoleon himself, who seems to have looked back on this period of his life with warmer recollections of pleasurable enjoyment than he had experienced on any other occasion.

It was probably the happiest time of his life. Honour, beyond that of a crowned head, was his own, and had the full relish of novelty to a mind which two or three years before was pining in obscurity. Power was his, and he had not experienced its cares and risks; high hopes were formed of him by all around, and he had not yet disappointed them. He was in the flower of youth, and married to the woman of his heart. Above all, he had the glow of Hope, which was marshalling him even to more exalted dominion; and he had not yet become aware that possession brings satiety, and that all earthly desires and wishes terminate, when fully attained, in vanity and vexation of spirit.

The various objects which occupied Buonaparte's mind during this busy yet pleasing interval, were the affairs of Genoa, of Sardinia, of Naples, of the Cisalpine Republic, of the Grisons, and lastly, and by far the most important of them, the definitive treaty with Austria, which involved the annihilation of Venice as an independent state.

Genoa, the proud rival of Venice, had never at-



Digitized by Google

tained the same permanent importance with that sister republic; but her nobility, who still administered her government according to the model assigned them by Andrew Doria, preserved more national spirit, and a more warlike disposition. The neighbourhood of France, and the prevalence of her opinions, had stirred up among the citizens of the middling class a party, taking the name of Morandists, from a club so termed, whose object it was to break down the oligarchy, and revolutionize the government. The nobles were naturally opposed to this, and a large body of the populace, much employed by them, and strict catholics, were ready to second them in their defence.

The establishment of two Italian democracies upon the Po, made the Genoese revolutionists conceive the time was arrived when their own state ought to pass through a similar ordeal of regeneration. They mustered their strength, and petitioned the Doge for the abolition of the government as it existed, and the adoption of a democratic model. The Doge condescended so far to their demand, as to name a committee of nine persons, five of them of plebeian birth, to consider and report on the means of infusing a more popular spirit into the constitution.

The three chief Inquisitors of State, or Censors, as the actual rulers of the oligarchy were entitled, opposed the spirit of religious enthusiasm to that of

Digitized by Google

democratic zeal. They employed the pulpit and the confessional as the means of warning good Catholics against the change demanded by the Morandists—they exposed the Holy Sacrament, and made processions and public prayers, as if threatened with a decent of the Algerines.

Meanwhile the Morandists took up arms, displayed the French colours, and conceiving their enterprise was on the point of success, seized the gate of the arsenal and that of the harbour. But their triumph was short. Ten thousand armed labourers started as from out of the earth, under the command of their syndics, or municipal officers, with cries of "Viva Maria!" and declared for the aristocracy. The insurgents, totally defeated, were compelled to shut themselves up in their houses, where they were assailed by the stronger party, and finally routed. The French residing in Genoa were maltreated by the prevailing party, their houses pillaged, and they themselves dragged to prison.

The last circumstance gave Buonaparte an ostensible right to interfere, which he would probably have done even had no such violence been committed. He sent his aid-de-camp La Valette to Genoa, with the threat of instantly moving against the city a division of his army, unless the prisoners were set at liberty, the aristocratic party disarmed, and such alterations, or rather such a complete change of go-

Digitized by Google

vernment adopted, as should be agreeable to the French commander-in-chief. Against this there was no appeal. The Inquisitors were laid under arrest, for having defended, with the assistance of their fellow-citizens, the existing institutions of the state; and the Doge, with two other magistrates of the first rank, went to learn at Montebello, the head-quarters of Napoleon, what was to be the future fate of the city, proudly called of Palaces. They received the outlines of such a democracy as Napoleon conceived suitable for them; and he appears to have been unusually favourable to the state, which, according to the French affectation of doing everything upon a classical model, now underwent revolutionary baptism, and was called the Ligurian Republic. It was stipulated, that the French who had suffered should be indemnified; but no contributions were exacted for the use of the French army, nor did the collections and cabinets of Genoa pay any tribute to the Parisian Museum.

Shortly after, the democratic party having gone so far as to exclude the nobles from the government, and from all offices of trust, called down by doing so a severe admonition from Buonaparte. He discharged them to offend the prejudices, or insult the feelings of the more scrupulous Catholics, declaring farther, that to exclude those of noble birth from public functions, is a revolting piece of injustice, and,

Digitized by Google

in fact, as criminal as the worst of the errors of the patricians. Buonaparte says he felt a partiality for Genoa; and the comparative liberality with which he treated the state on this occasion, furnishes a good proof that he did so.

The King of Sardinia had been prostrated at the feet of France by the armistice of Cherasco, which concluded Napoleon's first campaign; and that sagacious leader had been long desirous that the Directory should raise the royal supplicant (for he could be termed little else) into some semblance of regal dignity, so as to make his power available as an ally. Nay, General Clarke had, 5th April 1797, subscribed, with the representative of his Sardinian Majesty, a treaty offensive and defensive, by which Napoleon expected to add to the army under his command four thousand Sardinian or Piedmontese infantry, and five hundred cavalry; and he reckoned much on this contingent, in case of the war being renewed with Austria. But the Directory shifted and evaded his solicitations, and declined confirming this treaty, probably because they considered the army under his command as already sufficiently strong, being, as the soldiers were, so devoted to their leader. At length, however, the treaty was ratified, but too late to serve Buonaparte's object.

Naples, whose conduct had been vacillating and insincere, as events seemed to promise victory or



Digitized by Google

threaten defeat to the French general, experienced, notwithstanding, when he was in the height of triumph, the benefit of his powerful intercession with the government, and retained the full advantage secured to her by the treaty of Paris of 10th October 1796.

A most important subject of consideration remained after the pacification of Italy, respecting the mode in which the new republics were to be governed, and the extent of territory which should be assigned to them. On this subject there had been long discussions; and as there was much animosity and ancient grudge betwixt some of the Italian cities and provinces, it was no very easy matter to convince them, that their true interest lay in as many of them being united under one energetic and active government, as should render them a power of some importance, instead of being divided as heretofore into petty states, which could not offer effectual resistance even to invasion on the part of a power of the second class, much more if attacked by France or Austria.

The formation of a compact and independent state in the north of Italy, was what Napoleon had much at heart. But the Cispadane and Transpadane Republics were alike averse to a union, and that of Romagna had declined on its part a junction with the Cispadane commonwealth, and set up for a puny and feeble independence, under the title of the Emili-

Digitized by Google

an Republic. Buonaparte was enabled to overcome these grudgings and heart-burnings, by pointing out to them the General Republic, which it was now his system to create, as being destined to form the kernel of a state, which should be enlarged from time to time as opportunities offered, until it should include all Italy under one single government. This flattering prospect, in assigning to Italy, though at some distant date, the probability of forming one great country, united in itself, and independent of the rest of Europe, instead of being, as now, parcelled out into petty states, naturally overcame all the local dislikes and predilections which might have prevented the union of the Cispadane, Transpadane, and Emilian Republics into one, and that important measure was resolved upon accordingly.

The Cisalpine Republic was the name fixed upon, to designate the united commonwealth. The French would more willingly have named it, with respect to Paris, the Transalpine Republic; but that would have been innovating upon the ancient title which Rome has to be the central point, with reference to which all other parts of Italy assume their local description. It would have destroyed all classical propriety, and have confused historical recollections, if, what had hitherto been called the Ultramontane side of the Alps, had, to gratify Parisian vanity, been



Digitized by Google

termed the Hither side of the same chain of mountains.

The constitution assigned to the Cisalpine Republic, was the same which the French had last of all adopted, in what they called the year five, having a Directory of executive administrators, and two Councils. They were installed upon the 30th of June 1797. Four members of the Directory were named by Buonaparte, and the addition of a fifth was promised with all convenient speed. On the 14th of July following, a review was made of thirty thousand national guards. The fortresses of Lombardy, and the other districts, were delivered up to the local authorities, and the French army, retiring from the territories of the new republic, took up cantonments in the Venetian states. Proclamation had already been made, that the states belonging to the Cisalpine Republic having been acquired by France by the right of conquest, she had used her privilege to form them into their present free and independent government, which, already recognized by the Emperor and the Directory, could not fail to be acknowledged within a short time by all the other powers of Europe.

Buonaparte soon after showed that he was serious in his design of enlarging the Cisalpine Republic, as opportunity could be made to serve. There are three valleys, termed the Valteline districts, which run down from the Swiss mountains towards the Lake of

Digitized by Google

Como. The natives of the Valteline are about one hundred and sixty thousand souls. They speak Italian, and are chiefly of the Catholic persuasion. These valleys were at this period the subjects of the Swiss Cantons, called the Grisons, not being a part of their league, or enjoying any of their privileges, but standing towards the Swiss community, generally and individually, in the rank of vassals to sovereigns. This situation of thraldom and dependence was hard to endure, and dishonourable in itself; and we cannot be surprised that, when the nations around them were called upon to enjoy liberty and independence, the inhabitants of the Valteline should have driven their Swiss garrisons out of their valleys, adopted the symbol of Italian freedom, and carried their complaints against the oppression of their German and Protestant masters to the feet of Buonaparte.

The inhabitants of the Valteline unquestionably had a right to assert their natural liberty, which is incapable of suffering prescription; but it is not equally clear how the French could, according to the law of nations, claim any title to interfere between them and the Grisons, with whom, as well as with the whole Swiss Union, they were in profound peace. This scruple seems to have struck Buonaparte's own mind. He pretended, however, to assume that the Milanese government had a right to interfere, and his mediation was so far recognised, that the Grisons pleaded

Digitized by Google

before him in answer to their contumacious vassals. Buonaparte gave his opinion, by advising the canton of the Grisons, which consists of three leagues, to admit their Valteline subjects to a share of their franchises, in the character of a fourth association. The moderation of the proposal may be admitted to excuse the irregularity of the interference.

The representatives of the Grey League were, notwithstanding, profoundly hurt at a proposal which went to make their vassals their brother freemen, and to establish the equality of the Italian serf, who drank of the Adda, with the free-born Switzer, who quaffed the waters of the Rhine. As they turned a deaf ear to his proposal, deserted his tribunal, and endeavoured to find support at Bern, Paris, Vienna, and elsewhere, Napoleon resolved to proceed against them in default of appearance; and declaring, that as the Grisons had failed to appear before him, or to comply with his injunctions, by admitting the people of the Valteline to be parties to their league, he therefore adjudged the state, or district, of the Valteline, in time coming, to belong to and be part of the Cisalpine republic. The Grisons in vain humbled themselves when it was too late, and protested their readiness to plead before a mediator too powerful to be declined under any ground known in law; and the Valteline territory was adjudged inalienably annexed to, and

Digitized by Google

united with Lombardy, of which, doubtless, it forms, from manners and contiguity, a natural portion.

The existence of a state having free institutions, however imperfect, seemed to work an almost instant amelioration on the character of the people of the north of Italy. The effeminacy and trifling habits which resigned all the period of youth to intrigue and amusement, began to give place to firmer and more manly virtues—to the desire of honourable minds to distinguish themselves in arts and arms. Buonaparte had himself said, that twenty years would be necessary to work a radical change on the national character of the Italians; but even already those seeds were sown, among a people hitherto frivolous because excluded from public business, and timorous because they were not permitted the use of arms, which afterwards made the Italians of the north equal the French themselves in braving the terrors of war, besides producing several civil characters of eminence.

Amid those subordinate discussions, as they might be termed, in comparison to the negotiations betwixt Austria and France, these two high contracting parties found great difficulty in agreeing as to the pacific superstructure which they should build upon the foundation which had been laid by the preliminaries exchanged at Leoben. Nay, it seemed as if some of the principal stipulations, which had been there

Digitized by Google

agreed upon as the corner-stones of their treaty, were even already beginning to be unsettled.

It will be remembered, that, in exchange for the cession of Flanders, and of all the countries on the left side of the Rhine, including the strong city of Mayence, which she was to yield up to France in perpetuity, Austria stipulated an indemnification on some other frontier. The original project bore, that the Lombardic Republic, since termed the Cisalpine, should have all the territories extending from Piedmont to the river Oglio. Those to the eastward of that river were to be ceded to Austria as an equivalent for the cession of Belgium, and the left bank of the Rhine. The Oglio, rising in the Alps, descends through the fertile districts of Brescia and Cremasco, and falls into the Po near Borgo-forte, inclosing Mantua on its left bank, which strong fortress, the citadel of Italy, was, by this allocation, to be restored to Austria. There were farther compensations assigned to the Emperor, by the preliminaries of Leoben. Venice was to be deprived of her territories on the mainland, which were to be confiscated to augment the indemnity destined for the empire; and this, although Venice, as far as Buonaparte yet knew, had been faithful to the neutrality she had adopted. To redeem this piece of injustice, another was to be perpetrated. The state of Venice was to receive the legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna, in lieu

Digitized by Google

of the dominions which she was to cede to Austria; and these legations, it must not be forgotten, were the principal materials of the Cispadane Republic, founded by Buonaparte himself. These, however, with their population, which he had led to hope for a free popular government, he was now about to turn over to the dominion of Venice, the most jealous oligarchy in the world, which was not likely to forgive those who had been forward in expressing a desire of freedom. This was the first concoction of the treaty of Leoben, from which it appears that the negotiators of the two great powers regarded the secondary and weaker states, whether ancient or of modern erection, merely as make-weights, to be thrown into either scale, as might be necessary to adjust the balance.

It is true, the infant Cispadane Republic escaped the fate to which its patron and founder was about to resign it; for, after this arrangement had been provisionally adjusted, news came of the insurrection of Venice, the attack upon the French through her whole territory, and the massacre at Verona. This aggression placed the ancient Republic, so far as France was concerned, in the light of a hostile power, and entitled Buonaparte to deal with her as a conquered one, perhaps to divide, or altogether to annihilate her. But, on the other hand, he had received their submission, ratified the establishment of

Digitized by Google

their new popular constitution, and possessed himself of the city, under pretence of assigning it a free government, according to the general hope which he had held out to Italy at large. The right of conquest was limited by the terms on which surrender had been accepted. Austria, on the other hand, was the more deeply bound to have protected the ancient republic, for it was in her cause that Venice so rashly assumed arms; but such is the gratitude of nations, such the faith of politicians, that she appears, from the beginning, to have had no scruple in profiting by the spoils of an ally, who had received a death-wound in her cause.

By the time the negotiators met for finally discussing the preliminaries, the Directory of France, either to thwart Buonaparte, whose superiority became too visible, or because they actually entertained the fears they expressed, were determined that Mantua, which had been taken with such difficulty, should remain the bulwark of the Cisalpine Republic, instead of returning to be once more that of the Austrian territories in Italy. The Imperial plenipotentiaries insisted, on the other hand, that Mantua was absolutely necessary to the safety of their Italian possessions, and became more so from the peculiar character of their new neighbour, the Cisalpine Republic, whose example was likely to be so perilous to the

Digitized by Google

adjacent dependencies of an ancient monarchy. To get over this difficulty, the French general proposed that the remaining dominions of Venice should be also divided betwixt Austria and France, the latter obtaining possession of the Albanian territories and the Ionian islands belonging to the republic, of which the high contracting powers signed the death-warrant; while Istria, Dalmatia, Venice herself, and all her other dominions, should be appropriated to Austria. The latter power, through her minister, consented to this arrangement with as little scruple, as to the former appropriation of her forlorn ally's possessions on the Terra Firma.

But as fast as obstacles were removed on one side, they appeared to start up on another, and a sort of pause ensued in the deliberations, which neither party seemed to wish to push to a close. In fact, both Napoleon, plenipotentiary for France, and Count Cobentzel, a man of great diplomatic skill and address, who took the principal management on the part of Austria, were sufficiently aware that the French government, long disunited, was in the act of approaching to a crisis. This accordingly took place, under circumstances to be hereafter noticed, on 18th Fructidor, creating, by a new revolutionary movement, a total change of administration. When this revolution was accomplished, the Directory, who accom-

Digitized by Google

plished it, feeling themselves more strong, appeared to lay aside the idea of peace, and showed a strong disposition to push their advantages to the utmost.

Buonaparte was opposed to this. He knew that if war was resumed, the difficulties of the campaign would be thrown on him, and the blame also, if the results were not happy. He was determined, therefore, in virtue of his full powers, to bring the matter to a conclusion, whether the Directory would or not. For this purpose he confronted Cobentzel, who still saw his game in gaining delay, with the sternness of a military envoy. On the 16th October, the conferences were renewed upon the former grounds, and Cobentzel went over the whole subject of the indemnifications, insisting that Mantua, and the line of the Adige, should be granted to the Emperor, threatening to bring down the Russians in case the war should be renewed, and insinuating that Buonaparte sacrificed the desire of peace to his military fame, and desired a renewal of the war. Napoleon, with stern but restrained indignation, took from a bracket an ornamental piece of china, on which Cobentzel set some value, as being a present from the Empress Catherine. "The truce," he said, "is then ended, and war declared. But beware—I will break your empire into as many fragments as that potsherd." He dashed the piece of china against the hearth, and



Digitized by Google

withdrew abruptly. Again we are reminded of the Argantes of Tasso.*

The Austrian plenipotentiaries no longer hesitated to submit to all Napoleon's demands, rather than again see him commence his tremendous career of irresistible invasion. The treaty of Campo Formio therefore was signed; not the less promptly, perhaps, that the affairs at Paris appeared so doubtful as to invite an ambitious and aspiring man like Napoleon to approach the scene where honours and power were distributed, and where jarring factions seemed to await the influence of a character so distinguished and so determined.

The fate of Venice, more from her ancient history than either the value of her institutions, which were execrable, or the importance of her late existence, still dwells somewhat on the memory. The ancient republic fell "as a fool dieth." The aristocrats cursed the selfishness of Austria, by whom they were swallowed up, though they had perilled themselves in her cause. The republicans hastened to escape from Austrian domination, grinding their teeth with

---

* Spiegò quel crudo il seno, e'l manto scosse,
Ed a guerra mortal, disse, vi sfido;
E'l disse in atto si feroce ed empio
Che parve aprir di Giano il chiuso tempio.
*La Gerusalemme Liberata, Canto II.*

Digitized by Google

rage, and cursing no less the egotistic policy of the French, who, making a convenient pretext of their interest, had pretended to assign them a free constitution, and then resigned them to become the vassals of a despotic government.

The French secretary of legation, who had played a remarkably active part during the Revolution, hazarded a remonstrance to Buonaparte on the surrender of Venice to Austria, instead of its being formed into a free democracy, or united with the Cisalpine Republic. Buonaparte laughed to scorn a man, whose views were still fixed on diffusing and propagating the principles of Jacobinism. "I have received your letter," was the stern and contemptuous reply, "and cannot comprehend it. The Republic of France is not bound by any treaty, to sacrifice its interests and advantages to the Committee of Public Safety in Venice, or to any other class of individuals. France does not make war in behalf and for the benefit of others.* I know it costs nothing for a few chattering declaimers, whom I might better describe as mad-

* The language of injustice is alike in similar instances. When Edward I., in the course of over-running Scotland, was reminded of the claims of the candidate for the throne, in whose cause he had pretended to take arms, he answered in the very words of Buonaparte,—"Have we nothing else to do but to conquer kingdoms for other people?"

Digitized by Google

men, to talk of an universal republic—I wish they would try a winter campaign. The Venetian Republic exists no longer. Effeminate, corrupted, treacherous, and hypocritical, the Venetians are unfit for liberty. If she has the spirit to appreciate, or courage to assert it, the time is not unfavourable—let her stand up for it." Thus, with insult added to misery, and great contempt thrown by Napoleon on the friends of liberty all over the world, the fate of Venice was closed. The most remarkable incident of the final transfer to the Austrians was, that the aged Doge Marini dropt down senseless as he was about to take the oath of allegiance to the Imperial commissioner, and died shortly after.

Napoleon Buonaparte had now finished for the present his career of destiny in Italy, which country first saw his rising talents, and was always a subject of peculiar interest to him. He took an affecting leave of the soldiers, who could scarce hope ever to see him replaced by a general of merits so transcendant, and made a moderate and judicious address to the Cisalpine Republic. Finally, he departed, to return through Switzerland to Rastadt, where a congress was sitting for the settlement and pacification of the German empire, and where he was to act as a plenipotentiary on the part of France.

On the journey he was observed to be moody and deeply contemplative. The separation from a hun-



Digitized by Google

dred thousand men whom he might call his own, and the uncertainty of the future destinies to which he might be summoned, are enough to account for this, without supposing, as some have done, that he already had distinctly formed any of those projects of ambition which Time opened to him. Doubtless, however, his ardent ambition showed him remote and undefined visions of greatness. He could not but be sensible that he returned to the capital of France in a situation which scarce admitted of any mediocrity. He must either be raised to a yet more distinguished height, or altogether broken down, levelled with the mass of subjects, and consigned to comparative obscurity. There was no middle station for the Conqueror and Liberator of Italy.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
3 9015 06102 6046

Digitized by Google